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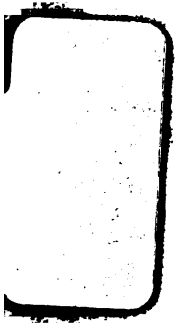

CPW

Grant

CPW

LETTERS

FROM

THE MOUNTAINS;

BEING THE REAL

CORRESPONDENCE OF A LADY,

BETWEEN THE YEARS 1773 AND 1803.

—— " Memory swells
" With many a proof of recollected love."

THOMSON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME,
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1806.

LETTERS

FROM

THE MOUNTAINS.

LETTER CV.

TO MISS E.

JUNE 10, 1774.

MY DEAR E.,

I WILL make no excuſes for having your two entertaining letters ſo long unanſwered; but rather ſhew my gratitude, by giving you, as well as I can, ſome account of my late excurſion, which has helped a little to divert the chagrin I felt at my ever dear Miſs O.'s departure.—But I

 muſt

muſt thank you for your ſincere ſympathy with a grief, that to many would appear romantic or exaggerated, or might at beſt be conſidered as the reſult of a retired life, little acquaintance with the world, and the neceſſity a weak mind feels of having ſome thing, or ſome body, to lean upon.—She made my ſorrow more excuſable by ſeeming to feel, nay really feeling, as much herſelf.—Mine might be accounted childiſh, becauſe I was, as you well knew, womanly in appearance, while a mere child in years and judgement.—But this was by no means the caſe with her.—Had you but known her, you would be convinced that it is not merely the pleaſure of agreeable ſociety that I mourn over; but that her mind was firm, rational, and enlightened, and her friendſhip a real benefit as well as honour to me.—I know I tire you, but you muſt have patience, for you will hear a great deal more on this ſubject if you indulge me in ſaying, as uſual, what is neareſt my heart, and uppermoſt

permoſt in my fancy.——This is the beſt place in the world for cultivating friendſhip; and therefore, in ſpite of all the privations to which it condemns me, I will love it; becauſe there is little to ſcatter the recollection of the days I wiſh to live over again, or to divert me from ſelf-culture, the only object that now remains to me.——Do you remember my mentioning an agreeable neighbour in one of my former letters, who lives a mile off, in a ſituation equally ſingular and beautiful?—I mean Miſs C. M.—She is an acquiſition in her way, ſenſible and ſincere, though uncultivated.—She poſſeſſes a fund of genuine humour; and I believe has a regard for me.—With this agreeable companion I went down to Inverneſs in May, making a very pleaſant and pictureſque voyage down our fine lake in the galley.—I got your kind letter juſt as I was coming away, but delayed anſwering it till I could tell you ſomething of my travels.—We meant to ſtay but a few days;

but, betwixt kindneſs and contrary winds, were detained three weeks.—Your extreme delicacy with regard to your Dunbar jaunt might be an example to me; but I reſolve to do good for evil, and carry you north, though you would not give me an ideal jaunt to the ſouth.—Come with me then to the capital of the Highlands.——The town is moſt agreeably ſituated at the very threſhold of this rugged territory; the mountains of which riſe with abrupt grandeur to bound the proſpect on one hand, the plain being of four or five miles extent, while a large bay of the ſea limits it on the other.—From the odd looking hill of Tommin-a-heurich, which riſes in the middle of this plain, the fertile ſhires of Roſs and Murray indulge the eye with a boundleſs view of gentlemen's ſeats, ſeated generally under the ſhelter of eminences, and ſurrounded with wood plantations, (for the gentry here are great improvers,) whence we overlook extenſive fertile plains, and

" Softly ſwelling hills,
On which the power of cultivation lies,
And joys to ſee the wonders of his hand."

Yet, over and above the partiality which we are apt to contract for our place of abode, we found a ſameneſs in that extent of lowland that did not compenſate for the variety afforded by our wild hills and winding glens.—Beſides, its north-eaſt ſituation expoſes it to ſuch chilling blaſts, as made us reflect with pleaſure on the ſhelter we receive from our mountains, which are like ſome lofty and revolting characters, who appear ſtern and awful to ſtrangers, but are all warmth and kindneſs to their own family.—Yet I would like none of theſe climates, where

" Winter lingering chills the lap of May;"

if I could help myſelf.—But to return to the ſaid capital.—It is ſomehow a cheerful looking place becauſe the people look cheerful; yet not flouriſhing, though no

ſituation can be better adapted for the purpoſes of commerce.—It has, however, a genteel ſociety; and one meets with many well-bred agreeable people.—They have aſſemblies every fortnight, gayer than your Glaſgow ones; which may be accounted for by their being attended by the neighbouring gentry, who are numerous and polite.—Theſe gentry too have many of them been abroad, in the army, or otherwiſe, and thus add liberal notions and poliſhed manners to the acute and ſprightly genius of the country.—Their great diſtance from the capital often makes their provincial town the ſcene of their winter amuſements.—Nothing took my fancy ſo much there as the ladies.—They are really, in general, ſhowy handſome women, excellent dancers, and have the beſt complexions I ever ſaw.—Indeed you can ſcarce meet a young lady who does not remind you of the beauties in old romances.—They have a great deal of flaxen hair, a ſkin tranſparently fair, and

cheeks

cheeks like the opening roſe.—Yet their features are ſeldom regular or delicate, and their beauty is of that kind which vaniſhes with the bloom of youth.—Their perſons are large, and they are fat as heart could wiſh; yet, on the whole, they look cheerful and innocent.—They certainly ſpeak better Engliſh than moſt Scots do, but with a ſharp imperative tone.—They are very frank, and full of profeſſions of kindneſs.—But I teaze you with what perhaps loſes all intereſt in my dull deſcription.—We had our ſhare of adventures in coming home, ſome of them abundantly ludicrous; but the minutiæ would be more tireſome than Clariſſa's, without being compenſated by the ſame intereſt and fancy.—We moralized, and wandered by ourſelves in a moſt beautiful wood for two or three days, lodging at night in a great old chateau, where the ſervants were ordered to give us all we wanted.—All this while we waited for a fair wind; we had no book or work.—C. ſung

like a ſyren to me, and I caught young wild ducks, which ſhe tried to tame, while I gathered wild flowers.—We begun at laſt to ſuffer

" The pains and penalties of idleneſs."—

I held out better than ſhe, having more rural taſte, and taking more intereſt in trifles.——We came up at laſt, by moon-light, in a boat.—In the morning we landed at the ſweeteſt place imaginable, the Laird of Glenmoriſton's ſeat; which delighted me ſo much with quietneſs and wildneſs, and romantic environs, and hoſpitable eaſy people, and beautiful children, that I would deſcribe it to you if I thought Inverneſs were not more than enough at once. I would need to have the Princeſs Scheher-ſade's talents before I could give you half our adventures.—They ended however in the laird and lady kindly coming up with us, and ſpending a moſt agreeable day at my father's.—I have only time to tell you, that I have heard four times from Miſs O.,

that

that I thought many times of you every day in the wood, and that I am proud of being two letters in your debt.

I am moſt affectionately yours, &c.

LETTER CVI.

TO MISS B.

FORT AUGUSTUS, MARCH 15, 1777.

MY DEAR B.,

THE laſt haſty lines you had from me were ſo rapidly ſcrawled, that you would hardly make out the little meaning they contained.—The ſage bearer was on the fidget at my elbow the whole time I was writing it. I have been a good deal indiſpoſed, great part of the winter, with colds, and your old enemy the tooth-ache.—I hope it is your very tooth-ache that has for-

ſaken you to attack me.—The thoughts of your eaſe would increaſe my patience. "If ever there was yet a philoſopher who could endure the tooth-ache patiently." Now I believe the reaſon that you and I, and the philoſophers, bear the great evils of life ſo much better than the tooth-ache, is, that we get ſome credit for ſuffering in other caſes, but in this, if we were quiet, no one would believe we were in agony.—What a heavenly half hour one enjoys on the firſt ceſſation of hoſtilities!—What a delightful diſeaſe it is that has the faculty of converting eaſe to tranſport!—For my own part, now that I am better, I have a double enjoyment of every thing.——You, who have the buſtle of a crowded town, and a ſucceſſion of amuſements, to ſteal away the long dark evenings, muſt need wonder how we manage to get quit of them.—Exiles as we are from the gay and faſhionable walks of life, we fall upon wondrous contrivances to ſoften the rigour of the ſeaſon, and

" Twine a garland round dark winter's brow."

You can form no idea of our multiplied reſources, unleſs you were to paſs a month among us.—Reading, walking, and all ſpeculative and ſolitary amuſements, you well know, can be enjoyed here as well as in town.—But you have no notion how townified folks are in all theſe little garriſons; and how theſe ſmall circles, which neceſſity has driven together, ape the manners of the great world they have reluctantly left behind.—We too have our viſits, our ſcandal, brought from thirty miles diſtance.—Our tittle-tattle, our jealouſies, our audible-whiſpers, and ſecrets that every body knows.—When any one marries within the county-bounds, we all ſit in judgment, and are ſure to find ſome fault with either party, as if it were our own concern; and when any one dies within twenty miles, we are all very buſy in ſounding their praiſes, and contrive to rake a great many virtues from among their aſhes, that we never gave them credit

for, till they were out of the reach of our envy.—Then when Mrs. N., or Madame le Commandant, receive any new article of dreſs, we all fly to admire it, and then hurry away to waſh gauzes, or in ſome other imperfect manner, to contrive a humble imitation of it.—Not to dwell on each minute particular, believe that our handful of antiquated beaux and ruſticated belles juſt do every thing in the country that your's do in town, only with more languor and ill humour. —People habituated to that manner of life, carry its follies and impertinences into the very boſom of tranquillity. When they walk, 'tis on the hard gravel road, to get an appetite; when they read, 'tis ſome periodical matter, to doſe away time till the ſtated card-party begins.—Theſe people always give me pain.—They appear like fiſh out of water, gaſping and ſtruggling in a ſtrange element.—It provokes me in a place where nature ſeems to reign paramount, enthroned in the center of her ſublimeſt retreat, and

ſurrounded

ſurrounded by her genuine children, to ſee theſe inſipid aliens inſult her with their ennui.—I mean no reflection on a town life, but merely to obſerve, that people, who have no reſources within themſelves, and aſpire at no improvements, can hide their defects beſt in a crowd.—I have been talking all the while of we and us, without telling you whom I meant to comprehend under theſe terms.—We have, beſides the old immoveable ſet, an officer of Invalids, his wife and daughter from Edinburgh, who are ever pining for want of company they could ill afford to keep, and public places, which it would ruin them to frequent.—They ſtrive much to exalt our idea of their former conſequence, by regretting that there are no noblemen's ſeats at a viſiting diſtance; and that tumblers and rope-dancers never come this way.—Then we have a pair who are a great acquiſition; Captain D. of the 42d., an excellent officer and accompliſhed gentleman, who is alſo beloved

for

for his worth and good nature. He is married to a daughter of Colonel G. G. of the ſame regiment, who, till now, lived always in a gay circle of the firſt company, but is wonderfully domeſticated, and appears to be a good wife and tender mother. - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - So, among all this groupe of originals, Mr. G.'s ſatirical wit, and D.'s dry humour, find abundant food. - - - - - - Alas! theſe Americans, ungrateful favourites of Heaven, not ſatisfied with throwing away the happineſs they poſſeſſed ſupereminently, what public diſturbance and private miſery have they occaſioned to others!—And how do the remoteſt corners of this extenſive empire vibrate with the ſhock of their calamities!—If our dear Harriet's family does not further increaſe before the end of May, I hope to be at the chriſtening.—My father, whoſe health is better than uſual, will go with me. I ſhall fix my head-quarters at Mrs. P—s, from whence to make excurſions to the no

ſmall

ſmall annoyance of you and H—, and the utter deſtruction of the poor D—. If ſtill exiſting, and perſiſting, he'll find there's no reſiſting, &c.—My cordial love to our H.

LETTER CVII.

TO MISS E.

PERTH, MAY 6, 1777.

YOUR moſt amuſing and agreeable letter came in good time to relieve my manifold anxieties.—We had a little more ſelf-command than when your tender and ludicrous one made us laugh and cry before witneſſes at Leith, to our utter confuſion and diſtreſs: but the good people there knew more about thoſe kind of emotions.—Jenny took out her tickets yeſterday, in full dependence on my leaving town with

Sri

Sir L. G., who has neither appeared nor ſent, to my great embarraſſment.—I leave Jane to explain all the intricacies of this broken aſſignation; but I think the reaſon is, that he was called ſuddenly back to the marriage of his daughter, the fair widow you have heard me mention.—Jenny and I ſupped with the B.'s, where we were told that the baronet's horſes are ſtill in town.—I have been perſuaded by theſe new friends to ſtay till Thurſday ſtill.—I leave Jane to do juſtice to the uncommon merit and extreme kindneſs of this moſt amiable family. —I conſider their acquaintance as a great acquiſition, and am reſolved to make the moſt of our remote connexion.—At any rate, in my preſent dejected ſtate, I could be eaſier here than at couſin J.'s; for there eaſe and freedom were unheard of ſtrangers. —They were too civil to let us alone, too deſirous of entertaining to hold their tongues a moment, too obſervant to let us look ſerious, without aſking why we were ſo dull,

or

or out of the window, without taxing us with being wearied of them.—In ſhort, we did not get our *elbows ſet on the tea-table* while we ſtaid—The viſitors were worſe.—They had almoſt frozen us to death with formality.—Then we had continual invitations from agreeable people out of their circle, which we accepted the readier as we were not quite the thing at home, and that was miſpriſion of treaſon.—As I know Jenny ſtaid out of complaiſance to me, I did all I could to keep her ſpirits up, but ſunk entirely when ſhe left me.—I *made believe*, all day—but ſuch a night, and ſuch a tooth-ache in the morning.—Yet I was rouſed into ſenſibility by that active evil; I was glad I ſtaid, for I never could have borne the carriage in that diſtreſs.—It goes off with a ſwelled face; I am glad I had it; I feel a ſerenity from the abſence of pain, which I never could have affected.——My dear ſoul, I would give any thing you knew this family. Your mind is fitted to taſte

the

the pleaſure which angels may ſhare with us; that of ſeeing a happy family living in love and harmony, and enjoying the heart-felt conſciouſneſs of living in the faith, and imitation of our Bleſſed Redeemer, with all the hope and comfort ſuch a life inſpires.—Such is the excellent perſon whoſe tender care I now experience; and ſuch are the children of her heart and of her prayers,—the heirs of her humble piety and meek benevolence.—Her eldeſt daughter is certainly one of the worthieſt of human beings; and the eaſe and good breeding of the whole family would ſoon convince one that it requires neither conſtraint nor auſterity to live *among religious folk*.—How glad I am to have found out theſe *leſs than kin, and more than kind*, for they don't exactly know our connexion, and have the more merit in their attention.——I can taſte no pleaſure without trying to ſhare it with you. O my true friend! how eagerly do my hopes fly forward to the time when we ſhall

once

once more ſhare every hope and wiſh together!—Yet, ſhould this be denied, I would fain look forward with trembling hope to our re-union in that ſtate, which excludes cares and wiſhes, yet excludes not ——. I will avoid preſumption, which muſt reſult from endeavouring to mingle, too fondly, the affections of this mortal ſtate with our dim diſcovered views of the world unſeen.——Did I tell you of an excurſion to Scoon, which we made in company with a large party of the beau monde of Perth?—I think I got this cold, while contemplating the forſaken manſions of departed greatneſs.—Yet I do not repent going; I love originals dearly, and antiquities *vaſtly*; witneſs Gibby S. and Willy A. at Glaſgow, and the buildings, &c. at Scoon.—I was pleaſed too with a monument of conjugal affection in the chapel belonging to the palace.—Lord Stormont, it ſeems, was firſt married to a foreign lady, who had the ſtrongeſt deſire to accompany

him

—Tell the whole family that their joint letter gave me as much pleaſure as ever a bone did to Ponto, or liberty to Kate, after her woeful uptyings in the cellar.—Your good and friendly mother has always a ſhare in my beſt wiſhes and prayers.—My love to my dear friends in the C.'s,—and chooſe the tendereſt words you can think of to ſay for me to our beſt angle of the old triangle at Bogton.—She was indeed the baſe of the triangle.—What a fine thing it is to have had the tooth-ache, when once one gets the better of it!—I can now cheerfully, as well as ſincerely, aſſure you, that I am ever affectionately yours, &c.

LETTER CVIII.

BLAIR IN ATHOL, TUESDAY MORN.

MY DEAREST B.,

HAVING written to Jenny this morning about my ſetting out, I muſt refer you to that letter for the motives of my journey.—That bear of a B— was ſo rude in neglecting to write, and ſo uncertain in his motions, that I rather choſe to go on, finding an honeſt man, whom I knew very well, from our place, driving an empty carriage north.—I dare ſay the old gentleman will overtake me to-morrow, but I don't care.—My Robin is driver in ordinary to the fort, and as wiſe and careful as a patriarch.—I have paſſed a moſt agreeable day of ſolitary enjoyment.—I travelled in ſilent ſtate, without meeting a creature to interrupt my muſings.—I did not even read, but amuſed myſelf

myſelf with my knitting, in up-hill roads.—I did not ſpeak a ſentence till I had ſome neceſſary communing with my landladies, except getting the hiſtory of the famous battle, as I came through the paſs of Killicranky.—My Robin was very intelligent and diſtinct about the antiquities of the road.—The ſingular beauty of the morning when I ſet out, and the ſatisfaction of getting my mind free from many doubts and fears that had hung upon me, and hourly change of charming ſcenes, raiſed my late dejected ſpirits to a ſweet ſerenity.—I looked forward with pleaſure towards home, the dear center of all ſocial and rational happineſs.—The beloved friends I had left behind roſe in my mind, not with the penſive parting look they uſually wear to my imagination, but all cheerful and benignant; warm with the hopes of that re-union in which I have placed ſo much of my earthly happineſs; the day aroſe with increaſed beauty, the ſcenery was enchanting, and all nature

ſmiled

ſmiled around me.—My mind had over-wrought itſelf before, and was now ſettled into a calm, and overflowed with pleaſing reflections—gratitude to my friends, and gratitude *for* ſuch friends, inſpiring a ſublimer aſpiration towards the great original ſource of pure affections and intellectual joys.——I ſhall not go into a minute deſcription of places you have heard ſo much of, but content myſelf with ſaying, that this day's ride afforded more noble and pleaſing objects than ever I met with in the ſame ſpace of time; for you muſt remember that I came ſouthward through Breadalbane, ſo all this is quite new to me.——The rich and variegated country you paſs through on leaving Perth, forms a fine contraſt with that gloomy barrenneſs, and thoſe frowning heights, that mark the entrance to the Highlands, far more ſavage than the interior, where the green wooded vales, which open towards Dunkeld, relieve the eye, and the ear is ſoothed with the deep diſtant

found of ſtreams, that "wander not unſeen" through theſe dark retreats.—Dunkeld has a ſingular air of romantic grandeur, derived from its wild ſituation, the remains of antiquity round it, and the ſoothing gloom of its fine woods, which abound in weeping birch, drooping its penſile branches, and ſighing to every wind.—— Theſe are contraſted by large ſolemn firs, that ſtand unmoved, in ſullen dignity, amidſt the fury of contending elements.—You will think me very fanciful, inveſting plants with ſentiment, but you may truſt me, when I aſſure you, I don't borrow from Harvey.—The reverence I have for his character and intentions has made me often try to like his flowery ſtyle, but I never could ſucceed.—I hope your efforts too, like mine, being, I am ſure, equally ſincere, may prove more ſucceſsful.——From Dunkeld you enter a wild, but not dreary country, in which the ſun, looking upon Faſcally "with farewell ſweets," called my attention

attention to " vales more ſoft than Arcady of old."—The ſweet winding ſtream of Argentine brought poor Struan to my recollection, with all his wanderings and hidings.—If he were not ſuch a ſot, I ſhould not think his life at all ſo unhappy as other people do.—Poets have ſkill to complain, and, no doubt, feel acutely. But if their own imprudence, and the cruelty of the world, did not drive them into corners ſometimes, they would neither muſe nor warble, nor taſte the ſweets of nature, ſo peculiarly their own.—And, in the buſtle of the world, they would run all the riſks other people do, without the common defences of caution and ſuſpicion. Now this furniſhes an excellent apology to the rich and powerful, for permitting the ingenious and highly-gifted children of nature to languiſh in obſcurity; and accounts for their letting them ſtarve in corners, while they chooſe their aſſociates among thoſe whom delicacy and ſenſibility ſhrink from, the

dull, the callous, and the ſervile.—I am growing ill natured, and had been better employed in telling you what a fine twilight ſcene this other princely ſeat of the Athol family forms, at this moment, oppoſite my window——

" But now the fairy vallies fade,
Dun night has veil'd the ſolemn view;
Yet once again, dear parted *maid*,
Meek nature's child, again adieu!"

LETTER CIX.

TO MISS E:

FORT AUGUSTUS, JULY 26, 1778.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

G— C—'s family left this place Monday, and we are all very melancholy; for we never ſhall ſee the worthy old veteran more.—

He

He has a complication of diſorders, one alone of which would be enough to make life miſerable.—It muſt be ſo, and the world could not go on otherwiſe.—Yet one, unuſed to ſuch ſcenes, cannot avoid ſurpriſe to ſee how thoſe we love beſt can divert themſelves, and be very merry, while we are in agony.—I ſuppoſe I was more affected than other people, merely becauſe the ſcene is new to me.—My poetical correſpondence, after which you inquire ſo kindly, has been ſome time in a declining ſtate, and is dying, if not already dead.—It did not begin with me, and I think it will end with me.—I wiſh I had kept copies for your amuſement; but I have not, as yet, ſet ſo much value on any thing of my own writing, as to preſerve a duplicate. This indifference is not affected.—I do not give myſelf airs of deſpiſing poetry; on the contrary, I not only love but revere the muſe, as believing her the prieſteſs of virtue.—Her ſacred and boundleſs influ-

ence over the heart and the imagination, may, properly uſed, produce the happieſt and nobleſt effects.—Witty and profligate poets have, no doubt, perverted their talents to the worſt purpoſes. But this only affects their cotemporaries, for I do not believe they are ever read by the next generation.—In the public opinion they rot and corrupt with their writers.—Who cares now for the wits of Charles the Second's days?—or who would wade through their dunghills?—But truth and nature are for ever new and delightful.—In all the viciſſitudes of time they hallow and preſerve the very language in which they are written.—Whoever is capable of being delighted by poetry, ſees nature and virtue in fairer lights and brighter colours than others.—But that reverence for the muſe, which ariſes from a conviction of her divine origin and boundleſs influence, makes me touch the lyre with a trembling hand.—Indeed in my own caſe, as well as others, I feel a dread and remorſe,

as

as if writing without genius were ſomething a-kin to propheſying without inſpiration.—But in this playful way of writing, merely for each other's amuſement, which one may call rhyming converſation, I feel leſs reluctance, becauſe I know it is to die in the little circle where it was born.—I ſhall try to procure a copy of a ſportive jeu d'eſprit on an odd ſubject, a Gull, belonging to our governor, which was entruſted to my care. He has a garden to which our parlour-window opens; it is at a diſtance from his own immediate territory, but abounding with flowers, &c. and adjoining to our's.—We reap the benefit of it, and have an intereſt in it. Now you are to underſtand, that my receiving the gull from this old warrior, the ſaid gull's employment, which was to preſerve the flowers by deſtroying the inſects, and my American travels in my infancy have been made the foundation of a long poem;—mythological, hiſtorical, and, in a very high degree, encomiaſtic; of which

your humble friend is the heroine. The mock ſolemnity and ſerious importance of it might divert, but you ſhall not be ſo diverted.—The plan follows.—Minerva, charmed, no doubt, with her votary's ſuperior ſkill in needle-work, propoſes to the celeſtial ſynod, that ſome mark of favour and diſtinction ſhould be conferred on her favourite. A bird to ride or fly on is the thing fixed. Every power lays ſome claim to diſcriminate or beſtow this honorary diſtinction.—Neptune will give a bird becauſe he ſilenced the ſtorms, and conveyed her ſafely over the Atlantic in infancy.—Venus ſays, I don't mind what,—Mars inſiſts that his veteran ſon T. ſhall have the honour of preſenting the bird, and Flora gives her vote favourably, becauſe the ſubject of conteſt is a kind of floriſt, and becauſe this bird is meant to be the guardian of flowers. —The extravagance is beyond your conception.——Who could anſwer this ſeriouſly?—Here is the ludicrous reply.

When

When one muſt laugh, or be angry, it is better to laugh.—

The GULL.

When gods and goddeſſes appear'd,
In thronging ſynod full,
The event of their debates I fear'd,
Which prov'd me but a gull.—

But you explain their wills divine,
And all my terrors lull,
Since by your gift I'll henceforth ſhine,
Exalted on a gull.—

Tho' frowning Mars ſhould favour more
Some Amazonian trull,
The milder pow'rs whom I adore,
Have grac'd me with the gull.—

And now his valiant ſon T—p——
Makes all thoſe threat'nings null,
Since he, as modern records ſhew,
To me convey'd the gull.—

For this may long his valiant arm
Have ſtrength to knock and pull,
And grant his garden or his farm
May never want a gull.—

Thro' foaming waves Europa rode
Upon a frowning bull,
But Neptune more indulgence ſhow'd,
In granting me the gull.—

* When youthful Horace, full of play,
Forſook his nurſe, Apul,
Doves cover'd him with verdant bay,
While ſleeping like a gull —

When o'er the Atlantic waves convey'd,
Beyond the Iſle of Mull,
While careleſs on the deck I play'd,
And ſtrove to catch a gull;

There as I ſunk in ſleep profound,
While tempeſts ſhook the hull,
My infant brows with ſea-weed round
Were cover'd by a gull.—

While Iriſh ſwain ſhillela loves,
While Sawney boaſts his mull,

* In lofty Vultures riſing grounds,
Beyond my nurſe Apulia's bounds,
When young, and tir'd with ſport and play,
And loſt in pleaſing ſleep I lay,
Doves cover'd me with myrtle boughs.

FRANCIS's Horace.

While

While Venus boaſts her ſnowy doves,
I'll boaſt, and praiſe my gull.—

While Neſs his bordering mountains laves,
Thy trough ſhall ſtill be full;
Then do not pine for Ocean's waves,
O my beloved gull!

Tho' you my fancy may deſpiſe,
Or think my genius dull,
Above Parnaſſian heights I'll riſe,
When mounted on a gull.—

Then midſt the Heliconian bow'rs,
The faireſt flow'rs I'll cull,
For well you've ſhewn the faireſt flow'rs
Are guarded by a gull.—

Then throw the garland at your feet,
Or twine it round your ſkull,
Becauſe you ſing in ſtrains ſo ſweet
The praiſes of my gull.—

I'm ſure you'll think me by this time
As ſtupid as a mule,
For ſtriving with ſuch ill-matched rhyme
To match the matchleſs gull.—

* * * * * * *

So much for *la bagatelle*. If this makes you laugh, I will ſend you ſomething to

produce the contrary effect in due time.—I muſt ſend off this in haſte; but in my next will give you ſome idea of Melpomene and Thalia,—for ſo theſe fair ſiſters might be called, if the youngeſt were as much a muſe as the elder.—In her gay playful way ſhe, however, parodies a ſong in the very act of ſinging, with wonderful eaſe and humour.—Though I have not ſpirits to keep up with her, ſhe diverts me very much when ſhe does not overpower me.—I could not have believed there were ſuch premature beings in nature; their perſons, underſtandings, and manners are ſo much beyond their years. The eldeſt has quite the countenance fancy beſtows on the tragic queen,—ſoft, ſolemn, dignified, and highly expreſſive.——I am inſenſibly doing what I wiſhed to defer.—Adieu my dear friend; ſend me fire-ſide intelligence, my chief delight.

LETTER CX.

TO MISS E.

FORT AUGUSTUS, AUGUST 10, 1778.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I WOULD willingly convey a ſhare of all my pleaſures to you.—But then I fear you will have a bad bargain by taking my pains into the account.—Now I have a knack of adding other people's to my own ſtock, which will give you very little profit of the tranſmiſſion (may I call it) of my few wild, ſimple pleaſures.——You inquire of Mrs. C.—But, for the ſmall-pox, ſhe would have been very handſome on a large ſcale. As it is, ſhe is very comely, and poſſeſſes uncommon powers of pleaſing.—There is a maſculine ſtrength and dignity viſible both in her figure and underſtanding.

ing.—But ſhe mingles ſuch perfect eaſe, pliant attention, and conſtant good humour with her dignity, that you reſpect her without being overawed.——Her language is pure and elegant, and gives the idea of a woman of faſhion, without the modiſh phraſeology.—Then you can eaſily diſcern that though ſhe lives in the world, and knows it, ſhe thinks her own thoughts, and expreſſes them in her own words. - - - -

" The world is frantic—fly the race profane !"—

How often does this quotation occur to me, when I ſee the ſtruggles of vanity and avarice, and mark the end!—Yet will theſe votaries of the world go on crying " We are the people, and wiſdom ſhall die with us;"—and look upon us that love peace, and would eſchew it, as poor viſionary recluſes, without any deſirable object of purſuit.—I could find in my heart to give them back their pity with intereſt, and daily reliſh more your happy project, of being doubly bleſt in our ſingle bleſſedneſs, in

that

that ſame air-built cottage behind the hill. If we are as happy in it as we were laſt winter, we may think our lot enviable.—Indeed the incurſions of the huſband and bairns, which Jenny reſolves to have, will now and then diſturb our tranquillity; but when they are gone, we ſhall put on our ſpectacles, and contemplate our lap-dog and parrot with new delight.——Talk of ſocial ties and endearments, I am ſure I get enough, and too much of them, without being bound in ties never to be broken.—I wiſh I could make you ſenſible how cloſe the ties of neighbourly kindneſs neceſſarily drew in theſe little places.—Every one that is ſorry ſolicits your ſympathy, and every one that is ſick claims your attendance, if it is ſuppoſed you have any kindneſs to ſpare.—Their diſtruſts and quarrels with each other make every one fly to me with complaints againſt each other.—This new-married lady at C. too has taken a moſt inconvenient fancy to me; and, like all other indulged

indulged invalids, cannot bear to have any of her fancies croſſed:—and ſo violent is her kindneſs while it laſts, that, betwixt her, and one drooping ſoul or other, M. G. not the leaſt nor laſt, my very ſpirit is worn down with attending ſick folks.—Miſs M^{c} C.'s ſiſter bears heavier on my mind than any one of them. She is left by herſelf, her father and mother being gone to ſome medical wells, where, I fear, the good primitive man will die.—I never paſſed ſuch a confuſed ſummer; and my poor C. M., that uſed to cheer my ſoul "with ſongs divine to hear," muſt be away too, and poor P. F.—The ſweet evenings, and bright ſilent noons, that we three were wont to ſpend in tracing up Tarſe, and wandering and lounging by turns on *rimen duie*, with our whimſical broken ſtarts of converſation, as detached from the reſt of the world, and as unlike it as the kids that played over our heads, riſe to my memory like the muſic of other times.—I would not grudge the abſence

ſence of this nymph and ſwain if they were as happy where they are; but I am ſure they are not.—When ſhall I again dwindle into my dear inſignificance?——A thouſand things uſed to charm me when my mind was vacant and eaſy, which I cannot reliſh now that theſe reſtleſs beings have diſturbed me, by making me the depoſitary of their ſelf-created troubles.—This it is to live ſo plaguy near people, and meet with them continually; though neither eſtimable or amiable, they get hold enough of one's affections to make one uneaſy. Factions in miniature are like a ſwarm of muſkitoes.—They can't kill you, but they teaze you inceſſantly, buz about your ears, and hinder your ſleep. I wiſh I could communicate to them ſome of our "rapture for the muſe," to cure them of ſlander and captiouſneſs.—When I am czarina of ſome new diſcovered region, one of my firſt edicts ſhall be, that every one of my ſubjects, who is incapable of being amuſed in a rational

wearied in the ſhade, and no ſound is heard along the deſart heath; let thy ſiſter, who mourns ſolitary in a diſtant land, viſit the muſings of thy ſecret ſoul!"——Think of me, who have not, ſince I came home, walked beyond the garriſon or village, except indeed to Culachy, and that was always in *quick time*.—I have not once ſeen my Penſeroſo Grot, nor been in Thicket Iſland, ſince I came home.—My rural enjoyments are confined to a twilight or moonlight walk under our own trees; and there, indeed, I reſume my wonted pleaſure of contemplating the calm boſom of my own lake, the pureſt of mirrors, exhibiting a proſpect awfully ſolemn and wildly magnificent; while the mountain tops ſeem ſleeping on its ſurface.

"In truth I am a ſtrange, and wayward wight,
Fond of each dreadful, and each gentle ſcene."

In this favourite ſcene of my meditations, many a glowing and penſive ſigh is devoted

to

to you.—There, with other aſſociates of my early days, your image comes full upon me, and I indulge in reveries that end in pain. —Farewell, friend of my ſolitude!——

LETTER CXI.

TO MISS E.

FORT AUGUSTUS, SEPT. 21, 1778.

MY DEAR SOUL!

I HAVE been very agreeably engroſſed for ſome days paſt.—You know how cloſely Mrs. L. and I drew to each other from ſimilarity of taſte and ſentiments.—She has correſponded with me ſince ſhe came to Urquhart, and twice attempted to come up, but was ſomehow hindered. A week ago I was confounded at receiving a letter from the wee advocate; Jenny will tell you who that

that is.——I demurred upon the occaſion, with modeſt heſitation, and opened it with conſternation, and no little trepidation, which cauſed a ſmall palpitation; for I dreaded a declaration, too bold to be made by any in the nation, to merit that needs no more elevation, in a maid whoſe bright graces illume her dark ſtation. — But I found my miſtake on more near obſervation; ſo, being aſhamed of my ſuppoſed penetration, I ſaved my vanity by an evaſion, and imputed his ſilence to deep veneration, which often accompanies great admiration.—Were I not afraid of the imputation of pedantic affectation, I could make this clear by a learned quotation from M. T. Cicero's fortieth oration; therefore, upon due deliberation, being moved by your vexation, beyond any other conſideration, I muſt reſume the thread of my narration for your further edification, and my thorough vindication, which concerns you as much as my relation; for ſcandal, you know,

know, ſpreads like an inundation, and even your prudence and my moderation cannot always ſilence a falſe imputation, which would at leaſt raiſe our indignation, though we bear greater evils with calm reſignation. —So be ſure to exert yourſelf for my juſtification whenever you hear me blamed in mixed converſation; mention my virtues with great exaggeration, and my faults, if I have them, with ſome extenuation, for even vices admit of ſome palliation, except when they riſe, by a fatal gradation, to a climax beyond all alleviation. — A friend ſhould never attempt aggravation; for though we live among a very perverſe generation, each of us may keep peace in our own habitation, and, by lying in bed, to eſcape obſervation, become worthy patterns for general imitation, and not ſleep in the face of a whole congregation, which would afford Andrew great delectation. So I conclude, in hopes of your full approbation, for I am ſure you muſt be tired of ſo many long words in rotation,

tation, as you always delight in concise abbreviation, as much as I do in fluent and diffuse narration, &c.——Well, but this letter from our *wee* friend meant nothing but to recommend to our attention the two brothers S's; one, my acquaintance through his mate, who, by his worth and engaging manners, can always recommend himself; the other, a batchelor brother of his, who is newly come home from India, not at all like his brother, but I believe a good kind of man.—The brothers and the lady came purposely to spend a few days with us.—We enjoyed each other exceedingly, and would have done so much more, had not other company interrupted us.—Mrs. S. improved upon me greatly; like Swift's Stella, she has lived in a circle of men and books, and has acquired certain peculiarities from so doing; yet she has a great fund of good humour, and has a spirited ease in her manner that is very pleasing.—She possesses genuine sentiment, and great sincerity;

rity, has a warm upright heart, and an excellent taſte, which appears in her dreſs, furniture, books, &c., but more eſpecially in her friends,—I was going to add, in her huſband, but ſhe, more properly, was his taſte. I forbear to tell you how modeſt and amiable he is.—I content myſelf with obſerving, that I never ſaw a huſband whoſe behaviour to a wife pleaſed me ſo well.—They would have induced me to go with them to Fort George, where I had promiſed to go on a viſit to Mrs. C., but I could not, being the week of our ſacrament, which ſhortened their viſit.—

* * * * * * *

Sept. 21ſt. is come, and I have not gone to Stratherick, having been agreeably prevented by a viſit from a couſin,—not P. but a married couſin, a great favourite. He will ſtay ſome days, which I rejoice at; I dearly love my relations when they are tolerable, and would fain blind myſelf when they are not.—I have got much informa-

tion from him with regard to our mutual friend, who continues to roll a ſtone up a hill with the uſual ſucceſs.—He, indeed, ſeems born to a froward fate, if indeed it is not rather his folly than his fate.—His late adventures are as ſingular as himſelf; but I will not ſwell this overgrown epiſtle with them.—You aſk if ever he and P. F. met?—He was a month here at the very time P. F. was in the gloomy humour I told you of; and their behaviour to each other was ſo haughtily cold on one ſide, ſo ſaucy and biting to the other!—One never unbent from his haughty reſerve ſo far as to caſt a glance at any of the kindred, only, on going away, he would look back to ſee if I were alive after all this;—the other ſpared no reflections, and would barely allow him the advantage of a tolerable exterior; and was out of patience when I aſſured him P. F. wanted neither good ſenſe nor good nature, though he did not think proper to ſpoil them with daily wear. At that time P. F.

would think it beneath his dignity to rail at any one, but ſhew his diſpleaſure by a diſdainful ſilence, when the object of it happens to be the ſubject of converſation.—

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My dear, I have now to thank you for another of your letters, the one Mr. M. forwarded.—I congratulate you on hearing once more, the muſical voice of the polite Mr.——, that favourite pupil of the Graces. ——I was long, like you, at a loſs to account for his partial attention to the much loved ſtep, but I think I have now hit on a ſolution of this difficulty.—You know Mr. —— reads the Scriptures, however unfaſhionable ſuch exploded ſtudies may be. —No doubt he has obſerved that when Dagon (the favourite idol of an idolatrous and prophane people) fell over the threſhold, the Philiſtines, from that day forward, would not croſs the ſaid ſtep.—Now, he having obſerved that many of the fair idols, worſhipped by the backſliding youth of Glaſ-

gow, do hourly, to his great pleaſure and emolument, croſs his ſaid threſhold; and fearing that, if any of them ſhould fall over it, the ſame conſequence might reſult, he has thought fit thus, audibly, to warn them of their danger.—I rejoice ſincerely to hear of our dear H—'s ſpeedy recovery.—The world cannot have too many like her, if her children reſemble her.—Yet I am ſomehow vexed to think how much trouble ſhe will have.—I am ſure you will do your utmoſt to tame Nancy during the interval of her mother's confinement.—I would rather than a good deal I had her here; I wiſh we could fall on ſome ſcheme to bring her.—I am truly ſorry that your friend P. D. has thrown herſelf away on ſuch a trifler. She always encouraged a train of coxcombs; I never ſaw a perſon of ſo much ſenſe ſo little jealous of her dignity. Adieu, dear friend!——

You in my thoughts, I repeat the five firſt verſes of the twentieth Pſalm, which you

you pointed out to me when I came away—

" O'er all my ſoul your ſacred influence breathes,
Inflames imagination, raiſes thought,
Infuſes every tenderneſs, &c. &c."

Next week I hope to be very lonely, and would fain try to be very happy; but I muſt not look for it.—For then the place will be full of company.—The whole country will meet about raiſing fencibles; and here will be Capt. A. G. and Capt. ——; but what do you know or care about our viſitors.—Adieu!

LETTER CXII.

TO MISS E.

OCTOBER 3, 1778.

I HAVE now to thank you for two of your kind letters ſince you returned from the Fairley; but, before I advert to their contents, will carry on my narrative as uſual. The day I ſent you my laſt, I received one from Inverneſs, with an account of poor Mr. Mac C.'s death, which is a loſs to ſociety in general, and to this place, as well as to his own family—irreparable.—He was a man of primitive ſimplicity of manners, and undeviating rectitude of principle; and diſcharged the duties of his uſeful though humble ſtation with peculiar diligence and fidelity, and was indeed the principal bulwark of religion in this place ſince poor

P. F.

P.F. left us, for our preſent paſtor does not reſide.—Well, but I was deſired to communicate to the poor girls the loſs they had ſuſtained.—I can give you no idea of the terror I felt at being forced to perform this taſk.—Yet the ſcene was even beyond what I had feared.—The widow was at the wells where he died; ſo the poor ſouls were in a houſe by themſelves, in a lonely place, half a mile from the village, where ſcarce one of our circle had the humanity to go near them.—Our family, and that at Culachy, were indeed the only exceptions.—The pretty gentle creatures have ſo much ſenſibility, (how that poor word is hackneyed,) that they really cannot bear ſuch ſcenes of diſtreſs; 'tis too much for their feelings, ſinks their ſpirits, &c.—So they prudently avoid every thing that can wake in their hearts thoſe emotions which certainly reſult from ſalutary impreſſions, and produce the beſt moral effect.—The divine pattern of every excellence, who was a man of

ſorrows, and acquainted with griefs, ſet no ſuch example.—

" O for the ſympathetic glow,
Which forc'd the holy tear to flow,
When, weeping over friendſhip's grave,
Ev'n he forgot his pow'r to ſave!"—

My dear love, I beg you will join with me in deſpiſing this ſelfiſh ſordid kind of ſenſibility, for I am juſt now particularly angry with it.—Dear ſoul, your too recent experience will teach you to judge, though others cannot, of the anguiſh and deſpair that overwhelmed theſe poor orphans.—— Poor indeed! for their whole dependance was their father's exertions.—But they have a good and generous brother; and, what is better ſtill, they have their father's good works, his prayers, his example. They will not be left deſolate.——I never behaved worſe; I had, I thought, reſolved, and fortified myſelf in the beſt way I could think, but in vain.—Indeed the ſcene was new to me.—I never witneſſed one of the kind;

kind; and it was the worſe that I liked the poor ſufferers ſo well.—I wrought myſelf up to a forced compoſure; but when I told, as ſoftly as I could, what every one elſe knew, the violence of their anguiſh was overpowering.—I went up twice every day ſince to aſſiſt with their mourning, &c.; but got ſo much cold at laſt, with walking in wet weather, that I have been feveriſh and confined ſince, but I am beginning to mend.—I will not plague you with a detail of petty grievances, but tell you, in general, that I have been teazed and plagued beyond ſufferance with people of a very different deſcription. - - - - - - - - - - - To bear our ſhare of the ſorrows of our friends is a duty we are born to; we are the better for it.—But to be worn out with the follies and abſurdities of thoſe who are incapable of friendſhip, is truly hard.—If I would wiſh myſelf any thing but what I am, it would be a hedge-hog.—Happy brute! that can be all collected within itſelf, and

there lie wrapped, indifferent and inſenſible to all that paſſes without.—I have ſeen human hedge-hogs; but theſe I do not envy, for they never unroll themſelves.—Now the genuine hedge-hog only does it occaſionally, when it runs the riſk of being injured; and ſo would I.—I ſuppoſe you have heard me ſpeak of the brother of the new-married lady at C—y, who, at a very early age, and in the moſt honourable manner, has made a fortune in India.—He is an uncommon, indeed I may ſay, an exalted character; one of thoſe of whom Pope ſays,

"Great ſouls there are, who, touch'd with warmth divine,
Give gold a price, and teach its beams to ſhine."—

I know you agree with me in taking a ſtrong intereſt in valuable and ſingular characters, though not perſonally known to them.—I ſhall give you a ſlight ſketch of this eſtimable perſon's hiſtory: He has juſt left us, and is to return, on his way from his native iſland, to viſit his ſiſter;—and we are daily entertained

entertained with anecdotes of him.—His hiſtory includes his character.—In the firſt place, he was the ſon of a worthy clergyman of the Iſles, diſtinguiſhed for his learning and abilities, and whoſe writings have thrown great light on the antiquities of his country.

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Now this is as pretty as fiction, and as true as hiſtory. It is inconceivable what good theſe ſmall penſions, ſo judiciouſly diſtributed, have produced.—They have cheered dejection, enlivened hope, and ſupported induſtry.——Here is a man that makes more than a dozen families happy at leſs expence than half a conteſted election would occaſion. — Theſe ſmall ſure ſtreams of bounty, that never dry up, do people more good than a large ſum, which would put it in their heads to be proud and idle, and ſit down to hatch imaginary wants.—Whenever a ſhower of gold falls upon me, I cer-

 tainly

tainly will go and do likewiſe.—His wealth, the reward of ſcientific ſervice, as one may call it, to a native prince, was not got in the common manner, and is juſt as uncommonly ſpent. Two hundred pounds, which he ſent to be diſtributed among the poor of his father's pariſh, I had almoſt forgot to mention. Advert, that this is not done from the overflowing of an immenſe fortune; he is not rich in the Eaſtern acceptation yet. But, as Burnet ſays of Tillotſon,

"He is rich in good works."

Excuſe repetition and confuſion.—I tell you once more, the people hereabout teaze and haraſs me with their hollow friendſhip and undeſired confidence.—Civilities that demand a return, and would extort gratitude, where there is neither principle or ſteadineſs;—and to devote your time where you cannot give your eſteem, and then to have the only eſtimable perſon in the whole groupe injured and neglected by the reſt;

to

to ſee that eſtimable perſon ſinking under a ſecret load of heart-breaking ſorrow, which I cannot alleviate, and muſt not ſeem to know, how vexatious!—My dear creature, you know nothing of the ſtrife of human paſſions.—'Tis here they rage and ſwell, and are ſeen in their full magnitude.—Confined to a few objects, and within a narrow circle, their agitation is more violent, and their effects more viſible.—— From the dreadful effervescence of idleneſs and malignity fermenting together, may all I love be preſerved!—The laſt is a moſt profound and myſterious period; but if I ever ſee that bleſſed ſight, your face, I will give you a very full explanation of it, which will make you wonder at leaſt, if not croſs yourſelf.——I turn to a more pleaſing ſubject, the contents of your letters.—I am glad you were ſo well entertained at the Fairley by my old acquaintance Clariſſa, and your new acquaintance Mr. M—.—I find you frequently preferred the company

of

of the former to the latter, and am pleaſed to find you ſo partial to my favourite heroine.—Never, ſure, were characters ſo well drawn, diſcriminated, and ſupported, as thoſe in Clariſſa.—Her own in particular.—Never, ſure, was any thing ſo uniformly conſiſtent, ſo raiſed above common characters, and yet ſo judiciouſly kept within the bounds of nature and probability.—I know very well there are thoſe who, from a very indelicate ſpecies of delicacy, object to the conduct of the ſtory in certain inſtances.—Thoſe who can, in the midſt of ſuch diſtreſs as her's, withdraw their minds from contemplating the trials of a ſuffering angel, to pollute their imaginations, are very unworthy indeed to be admitted into the ideal preſence of a Clariſſa.—I know not any criterion by which I would be readier to judge, and try, any one's character and taſte, than by obſerving with what degree of intereſt and feeling they ſhould ſurvey this correct drawing

from

from nature.—You can't think with what ſcorn I liſten to little miſſes, and *very little* maſters, who tell us in parrot phraſe, "nobody reads Clariſſa now.—People *now* think it languid and tedious."—Juſt as if the effect of good ſenſe, wit, humour, pathos, and, in ſhort, pure chriſtianity, could vary with the hour like fleeting modes and manners.—Ranting tragedies, written while rant was faſhionable, or vile comedies, where wit and talents are laviſhed in painting manners which happily no longer exiſt,—theſe, I ſay, may go out of faſhion; but truth is immutable, and nature, if you will bear a quibble, has invariably the ſelf-ſame variations.—Who then would affect to deſpiſe a clue that leads through all intricacies to her inmoſt receſſes, becauſe the thread of which it is compoſed is very fine, very long, and artfully twined of many filaments?——The means are proportioned to the end.—The ſtory, no doubt, unfolds ſlowly; yet every ſentence anſwers the great end of bringing the

the actors in the scene so immediately before your eyes, that you seem to have known and lived with them.—The approach is long, but it is to a noble object; and the avenue is planted with such endless variety of flowers, both pleasing and useful, that you must be dull and incurious indeed, if you stop or linger by the way.—I know nothing, out of the volume of inspiration, equal to the death-bed of Clarissa.—I feel the effect always new; wrapped in the delusion of this overpowering fiction, I have dreamed, as the Patriarch did at Luz, that I saw angels ascending and descending.—Generally in every story, real or fictitious, the interest ceases with the life of the hero or heroine.—But, in this instance, we hover over the vault, and trace every circumstance relating to the departed saint, with fond veneration.—Yet, after being so partial to our own sex, as to allow Clarissa to be a natural character, we may be so just to the other, as to suppose Lovelace carried

almost

almoſt beyond poſſibility.—A man could not exiſt, who, to ſo fine an underſtanding, ſuch courage, wit, generoſity, and talents, could unite ſo much cunning and cruelty, folly and villainy.—Yet the author has ſo far preſerved probability, as to make him act and ſpeak as ſuch a being would do, if any being could unite ſuch contradictions. —Modern hiſtory indeed refutes my wiſe concluſions, by preſenting us with an almoſt ſimilar character, Lord Bolingbroke, whom Pope diſtinguiſhes by the epithet of all-accompliſhed St. John.—He addreſſed his Eſſay on Man to him, and ſpeaks of him on all occaſions with the moſt enthuſiaſtic admiration.—Swift does almoſt the ſame; and Cheſterfield, who only ſaw him in extreme old age, when he might be thought to have outlived his talents and his graces, was yet dazzled with his perſon and addreſs; talks of him as the complete model of a finiſhed fine gentleman, as to manners, converſation, and eloquence.—Yet this

this man, after running into the most violent excesses in libertinism, and prostituting his fine talents to serve the meanest and most corrupt ends of a party, without reforming from his innate vices, had turned them into a more dangerous channel, by endeavouring to undermine those principles which the tenor of his life had disgraced.—Yet he had, after all, the art to persuade even the virtuous Pope, and that all-observing cynic Swift, of his sincerity and rectitude, and this merely by the force of eloquence, shining parts, and a kind of constitutional something, that passed for generosity and good nature. Thus, without a heart, without truth or morals, this man was enabled to captivate and do mischief, not only all his life, but even after death.—The deistical writings he left behind were not the result of self-conviction, or a desire to convince others, but the mere vanity of exploring the trackless wastes of speculation, of overthrowing established opinions, and

thus

thus creating a region in which to rule.—It was like Satan's expedition in ſearch of ſome domain where he might exerciſe power, and produce miſery.—I do not know what tempted me to wade ſo far out of my depth after Lord B., but you wiſh me to ſay all that comes in my head, and you muſt take the conſequences.—Farewell, affectionately!——

LETTER CXIII.

TO MISS E.

FORT AUGUSTUS, APRIL 5, 1779.

THESE promiſes are very fine, and I ſuppoſe generally made on ſuch occaſions, but I have no wiſh for any ſuch homage.—I never deſire or hope for more confidence, tenderneſs, or attention than you and I have ſhewn

ſhewn towards each other.—Indeed I expect not ever to taſte the ſweets of a more perfect union of minds.—I am neither ſurpriſed or chagrined at what you tell me of people's notion, that my ſuppoſed attainments will diſqualify me for ordinary duties, that is, for diſcharging them with diligence and propriety.—I ſhall always think myſelf obliged to you for every information of this kind, without the leaſt deſire of knowing from whom it comes.—It is very natural, and perfectly allowable, if one is charged with any matter of fact that one knows not to be true, that every means ſhould be immediately uſed to diſprove it. But, when we merely hear of theſe vague and general cenſures, which we conſtantly, and often juſtly, paſs on each other, inſtead of a hot and haſty vindication we ſhould endeavour to profit by this indirect inſtruction, and remove the pretexts for blame. Theſe good people only think of me what I have often thought of myſelf, that I am not

not well qualified for the conſtant exertion, ſelf-command, and caution requiſite in a married life.—There is no paſſion implanted in the mind but for ſome good purpoſe. —Vanity for inſtance. Now I think there is nothing I ſhould be ſo vain of as the conqueſt of my own habits, and other people's prejudices. To excel in a ſphere that is thought beyond me, would be a proud boaſt indeed.—Whatever one bends one's whole mind to, there is ſome chance of excelling in. But time muſt decide; and, in the mean time, I muſt hope and endeavour. —I may be raſh or indolent, but, on the other hand, I am pretty eaſy, being ſenſible I am not ſo obſtinate, opinionated, and ſelf-loving, as pretenders to literature among our ſex are generally ſaid to be.—I give you no directions. — Suppoſe yourſelf a bride, and apply the money as far as it will go.—As to what has been ſaid of what I have written, I am far, far, from aſſuming the leaſt merit upon it.—But this I am very

proud

proud of, that poſſeſſing, from infancy, that glow of imagination, and facility of expreſſion, which the owners are ſo apt to miſtake for genius, I have written ſo very little.—That little too, was thrown off in ſuch a careleſs manner, as made it evident that I had not given much time or thought to it.—In the mean time, I ſend two poetical pieces for your amuſement, merely to have them out of the way of more ſerious concerns.—One is from my fanciful correſpondent that you wot of; I think it her beſt; perhaps I am the more partial to it knowing the ſubject to be real.—I knew the young lady who is the theme of this tale of ſorrow.—She died laſt winter, in the twenty-third year of her age, a victim to the ſtruggle betwixt duty and attachment in a delicate and well principled mind.—Her conduct, though imprudent, was perfectly innocent.—But ſhe was every way delicate, her feelings nurſed by indulgence, and all made of tenderneſs and muſic,—It is

cruel

cruel to bring up any body ſo very helpleſs. —I will tell you all about her in my next. —The ode to Hygeia was written by your friend, and intended for Mrs. S. who has long been urging me for ſomething of the kind.—How happy it is, ſince I am deſtined to forſake a place ſo dear to me, that the ties are looſened that held me to it.—

" The ſhades, the ſtreams, the groves remain;
But friendſhip there I ſeek in vain."—

One by one, every body that I cared for, has dropped off, and I ſaw nothing around me but dreary vacuity.—We ſhall ſee what kind of a world the odd beings, ſo peculiar in taſtes and opinions, will create amid the central mountains.—No people, however, have their happineſs ſo much in their own power as we may have, if we were not ſo much in the region of tempeſts. We may, perhaps, be obliged to go to a cave, like Ajut and Aningait.—With love to dear Jenny, believe me ever yours.

LETTER CXIV.

TO MRS. S.

JANUARY 2, 1784.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

WHEN I ſit down to write you, (after this too long interval,) and begin to taſte the pleaſure of reviving, in this manner, the delightful eaſe and tenderneſs of our paſt intercourſe, my heart glows at the recollection, and I am ſurpriſed at myſelf, for allowing ſo long a time to elapſe without indulging myſelf in ſo pure a ſatisfaction;—but when my crowd of worldly cares ruſh in to interrupt this delightful reverie, the fervors of friendſhip, (like thoſe of a ſublimer kind,) are drowned in the clamours of the world.—I never experienced ſo much of this tireſome turmoil as ſince I wrote you

you laſt.—But, before I proceed to my wonted egotiſm, let me acknowledge your kind letter, which, after lying in ſtate two months at Perth, reached me when I too was lying in ſtate,—of which more hereafter.—I rejoice to hear that you are become

"The joyful mother of a hopeful ſon."—

How thankful ſhould you be to Providence, which has enabled you to fulfil the firſt duty of that fond relation! I am ſure you will pity me, who, though earneſtly deſirous, and in ſome reſpects well qualified, am not permitted to nurſe.—The wiſe people about me being of opinion it would endanger my ſmall ſtock of health at this ſeaſon.

"He that's convinc'd againſt his will,
Is of the ſame opinion ſtill."—

I ſhall have endleſs remorſe if any thing happens.—My mother was kind enough to riſk a winter journey, over Corryarich, on this occaſion.—'Tis by her advice that Miſs is ſent to graſs. I am anxious to hear

more particular accounts of young maſter. Whom do the wiſe people ſay he reſembles? I am ſure they have diſcovered him to be either his father's picture, or his mother's image, for theſe are the invariable phraſes.—May they rejoice that ſhe has eſcaped out of this land of famine.—'Tis the moſt inland part of Scotland; and, being ſo far from relief of any kind, their caſe is truly pitiable.—You may judge how my great ſtock of ſympathy, and my ſmall ſtock of prudence, muſt be combating on this occaſion.—I am truly obliged to Jenny for her letter.—'Tis great charity in you and her to write on without minding my ſuſpenſions.—You know I long remarked to you, that people get no extraordinary gifts without having ſome extraordinary occaſion for the exertion of them.—So it is with the ſpirit and fortitude of your left-handed hero, who, it ſeems, has had theſe heroic qualities not a little exerciſed.—He ſeems to be a perfect Ulyſſes in his woes,

his

his wanderings, and his perils.—I hope the concluſion of them will be equally ſucceſsful; that he will eſcape the fury of the American Læſtrigones, and enticements of the Weſt Indian *Lotophagi*, and that ſome fond and faithful Penelope will ſoothe and reward him after all theſe ſcenes of danger and diſtreſs are over.——The cloſe aſſociation of certain friends of ours aſtoniſhes me.—I did not think the tyger and the heifer were to eat ſtraw together till the return of the golden age; but I fancy M., abounding ſo much in that all-powerful metal, has begun a little golden age of her own, of which - - - and - - - have been partaking.—I ſend you a great comprehenſive benediction, including your brother and my dear Mrs. H. May every return of this ſeaſon of good wiſhes bring health and felicity to you and your beloved!—So prays, ſo wiſhes, your own, &c.

LETTER CXV.

TO MRS. S.

LAGGAN, AUGUST 18, 1785.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR kind letter, and the little volunteer that came with Jenny, gave me more pleaſure than you can imagine, conſidering what a variety of pains and pleaſures engroſs, agitate, and divide me by turns. Before I enter on the ſubject of yours, I muſt tell you how we went to Fort George, in the little machine, and took C. with us, who was not alarmed, as on a former occaſion when you were with us, but, on the contrary, ſeemed highly delighted with the journey, and all its accompaniments.—The journey, by the bye, was a very pleaſant one

one, being a continued ſeries of viſits, as the road paſſed the houſes of our connexions and friends all the way.—The ſcene of the meeting between the two ſiſters was more pathetic, and leſs ludicrous, than the one you witneſſed formerly.—Their mutual joy and affection was really *edifying*.—The eldeſt has made great improvements, ſo great that it would be no wonder if, like other little prodigies, ſhe ſhould diſappoint all expectation. There is a lady, whom I heard lately ſpeak on the ſubject, who is ſo impreſſed with the idea of premature children's diſappointing hope, that ſhe told me, with great tartneſs, ſhe never liked *progidys*, and was very glad there were no *progidys* in their family.—F^t. G. is a gay and polite place.—The ſociety well bred and agreeable, and the neighbourhood populous and pleaſant.—I made a ſhort excurſion to Roſsſhire, ſaw the pretty little town of Fortroſe, and the coaſt of that fine country, thickly planted with gentlemen's ſeats, being the

reſidence of the powerful clans of Roſs and Mackenzie. - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

So, after ſpending three weeks very agreeably at the Fort, we ſet out very early, before the *bairns* roſe, to avoid the ſtruggle of parting; becauſe both their hearts were ſet on coming home with us, and we had ſettled to leave C. there, for her improvement in the elegancies of the Engliſh tongue. I do not ſpeak of conquering our Scotch, alias Doric, dialect, the ſweet ſimplicity of which I think pleaſing in a child; but you are to know, that I make a point of making my mountain nymphs ſpeak the language of the mountains in the firſt place.—I am all anti-Pinkerton and delight in the Celtic. You cannot think what a ſource of pleaſure my little acquaintance with that emphatic and original language has afforded me.—I am determined my children ſhall all drink "from the pure wells of Celtic undefiled." They ſhall taſte the animated and energetic converſation of the natives; and an early acquaintance

acquaintance with the poetry of nature ſhall guard them againſt falſe taſte and affectation.—I never deſire to hear an Engliſh word out of their mouths till they are four or five years old.—How I ſhould delight in grafting elegant ſentiments and juſt notions on ſimple manners and primitive ideas.—This is juſt the Forte-piano character that we always wiſh for, and ſeldom meet.—How, indeed, ſhould we?—People, whoſe circumſtances confine them to breed their children at home, are ſo apt to have them ſpoilt for want of culture, and by vulgar aſſociation.—Then, if they ſend them to the common ſeminaries, there are ſo many of them together, ſpoiling each other with trifling converſation; and the love of vanity and dreſs rages like a contagion.—Their manners, nay, their very ideas, are ſo artificial, that their minds and manners wear a tireſome uniform. Now I am going to make an experiment on my mountain nymphs. If it fails, your laughing at me

will be only the ſmalleſt part of my mortification.—Know then, that I propoſe, in the firſt place, to attend, above all things to the culture of the heart; and at leiſure, and in due time, to the underſtanding; and, having ſecured theſe main points, to let the manners, in a great meaſure, ſhift for themſelves.—I pre-ſuppoſe a tolerable good diſpoſition, and ſome degree of ſenſibility; and, taking theſe for granted, I cannot eaſily believe that an unpolluted mind, unaccuſtomed to fear from without, or reproach from within, bred in the center of kindneſs and confidence, and having all its beſt affections conſtantly exerciſed, I cannot, I ſay, ſuppoſe any other than ſoft and artleſs manners to flow ſpontaneouſly from ſuch a mind, ſo formed, and ſo circumſtanced; eſpecially, when unaccuſtomed to vulgar language, and, what is far more degrading, vulgar ſentiments, which I have heard conveyed in very good language from very pretty mouths.—Even the ſtrong

temptation

temptation of wandering in my favourite path can ſcarce excuſe this long ſcamper.—So we ſet out, as I told you, and, after proceeding five or ſix miles, ſpent the reſt of the morning in ſurveying the antiquities of Calder caſtle, a venerable and gloomy edifice of grey renown; for this is the Cawdor of Macbeth, and it was a few miles to the ſouth of it that the witches anticipated his titles. I fancy their hagſhips reſided hereabouts; at any rate, I am ſure the demon of black-deſpairing melancholy dwells in ſome of thoſe caverns that echo the roar of Calder Water.—The houſe has no other inhabitant at preſent than an old Sybil, who lives in the cellar, and ſome legions of rooks and daws in the lofty towers, that add ſtrength and horror to this antique dwelling. You enter over a very narrow drawbridge, laid acroſs a deep chaſm.—We ſaw ſome good paintings, and tapeſtry frightfully fine; for Pharaoh was there, driving ſo furiouſly after the Iſraelites, and

the Red Sea ruſhing ſo fiercely upon Pharaoh, that you ſtarted back inſtinctively, not knowing which to fear moſt. Small gothic "windows, that admit no light, and paſſages that lead to nothing," or, at moſt, to a ſmall dark room with a thick heavy door, ſtrengthened with iron, theſe, and refounding duſky halls, and narrow winding ſtaircaſes, give no very high idea of the enjoyments of the virtuous and ſtately dames who wrought tapeſtry here in the days of feudal grandeur, and perpetual hoſtility.—You are ſhewn, in a very high tower, the ſelf-ſame bed in which Duncan, of pious memory, was murdered by Macbeth. It was brought from Inverneſs on the demolition of the caſtle there. The fact of Duncan's being killed in it is hard to eſtabliſh; but the bed is certainly unique in itſelf, and very unlike the beds of theſe degenerate days,—It is, in the firſt place, very large, and exactly ſquare; it is magnificent in its own way, yet it is evident that

that curtains were an unknown luxury when it was framed, The wooden canopy which forms the roof is ſurrounded by a moulding or cornice two feet deep at leaſt, of wood exquiſitely carved in flowers, with many imitations of palm and pine branches, and good ſtore of thiſtles. Round the frame of the bed, or bedſtead, (which is very low, though the canopy be lofty,) is another moulding ſeemingly formed to prevent the poſſibility of his majeſty's tumbling out. This, too, is richly carved; ſo are the poſts, and certain raiſed ornaments, not inelegantly repreſenting branches at the corners.— In ſhort, the expence of carving this bed (if the artiſt's recompence was adequate to his labour and ingenuity) might purchaſe the moſt coſtly curtains. ——From the battlements of the caſtle you ſee, in the back ground, a thick foreſt, old beyond hiſtory or memory, and ſolemn beyond imagination. — Tremendous rugged rocks appear emerging from the wood; on

traits of thoſe leſſer gentry around, who were attached, many of them, by the double tie of kindred and feudal ſubjection.—This laſt was rather patriarchal ſway, as they managed it.—Never, ſurely, was power ſo gently uſed, or protection ſo gratefully acknowledged. — Thoſe endearing, though inviſible and undefinable, ties, that have for generations held theſe people ſo ſtrongly to each other, and to their chief, produce united effects, which affords one of the moſt pleaſing views of human nature that can be met with.—The family, luckily for you, were from home, but had left their effigies behind.—Caro was quite charmed to ſee with what reverence I beheld his kindred ſhades.—He is to-night extremely anxious about ſaving my poor eyes.—So it ſhall ſuffice, that the caſtle is a ſpacious, convenient, and elegant manſion, where many heroes of the family, "on animated canvas ſeem to frown;" and where every thing evinces an abode, where baronial pomp and hoſpitality

hoſpitality ſtill continue to linger, ſoftened by the milder graces of modern elegance.—Theſe eyes I muſt ſave, and therefore I bid you heartily good night, and will begin a new letter to-morrow; for if once I reſume the reins of government, I ſhall not lay them down for landſcape painting.—Adieu! my true friend.

LETTER CXVI.

TO MRS. S—T.

GLASGOW, AUGUST 19, 1785.

AGAIN I reſume, and I inſiſt on being allowed ſome merit in reſuming, when the meadows glittering with dew, the aſcending larks, the freſh flowers, and the curling miſts that climb the oppoſite mountain, all invite me out to enjoy the ſweeteſt hour of day,

day, the ſoft ſhadowy twilight excepted. You know not how ſweet and ſacred the hour is that I devote to you.—To return to Strathſpey.—We ſpent two days with a relation of Mr. G—'s, and on Sunday went to hear my old friend's lord preach.—After ſermon we went in, and with difficulty eſcaped their kind compulſion, for we were engaged.—She becomes the holy ſtate very well; ſeemed compoſed and cheerful, domeſticated, and in a fair way of being ruſticated.—Strathſpey is quite a civilized country compared to this, and has a good neat village in it, where the father of the diſtrict has been cheriſhing ſome exotic manufactures, which do not ſeem to find the ſoil congenial.—In fact, a highlander never ſits at eaſe on a loom; 'tis like putting a deer in the plough.—We made a circuit of two days more, and then came home, and found all well and happy.—I am glad to hear ſuch good accounts of J. B., who, I truſt, will credit my recommendation.

mendation.— He appears a well-diſpoſed boy, ſtrongly marked with the true Engliſh character of ſincerity, integrity, and plain ſound ſenſe. - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - ſo much for this ſubject.—Rochefoucault ſays, very ill-naturedly, that people always find conſolation very eaſily for the misfortunes of their friends.—Painful experience aſſures me of the contrary.—My very ſpirit is wounded by my dear H—'s accumulated ſorrows; and reflection, inſtead of ſoothing, aggravates my affliction.—When I think over all our early friendſhip, animated by the ardour natural to that innocent age, on her ſide ſo pure and genuine;—when I think on all her truth, her gentleneſs, and meekneſs, and the dignity and delicacy that were intuitive, (for of *whom* ſhould ſhe learn them.)— My dear ſoul, you never knew her ſo well as I did.—The powers of her underſtanding, and the graces of her mind, never met with the ſunſhine of encouragement.—At the very time when they were

were expanding, we know how ſhe was ſecluded from improvement, and cruſhed by arbitrary harſhneſs. What a moderate degree of proſperity would have been happineſs to a ſpirit ſo regulated and ſo tranquil!—but, alas! to ſink under the cold hand of poverty, and have ſo many innocent ſufferers looking up to her, (I greatly fear, too, that he who ſhould ſupport and comfort her is by no means what we would wiſh him,) we know not even what to ſay to her.—Sympathy ſo ſweet, ſo ſoothing, in other caſes, avails not here.—For, to a perſon who has ſo much delicate pride, when one cannot alleviate pecuniary diſtreſs, 'tis inſulting to mention it.—What ſhall we, what can we, do for our friend?—Remember us with much eſteem to your beloved.—Accept the kindeſt wiſhes towards you and yours from C.—What a tide of information you muſt pour in upon me in return for this deſcriptive effort in folio. Be conſcientious, and then you will not be conciſe. Adieu!

LETTER CXVII.

TO MRS. S—H.

LAGGAN, DECEMBER 25, 1785.
(Ink frozen by the fire.)

FESTIVALS I always chooſe for writing to you, for then I am at leiſure.—Doubly ſo to day, for my lord and ſovereign is out, at a meeting of country gentlemen, and has left me here ſtarving, in ſuch intenſe weather, as none but Ultra-Grampians have any conception of.—I hope Charlotte has given you my Dalwhinny epiſtle; a very meritorious one too, conſidering what a cold vigil I kept to write it.—I long much to hear how far ſhe anſwers to the ſketch I gave you of her.—If I were leſs happy in my family I ſhould be inconſolable for want of her.—Even the *inexhauſtible* fund

of

of *entertainment* I poſſeſs in them, can ſcarce alleviate my chagrin for her departure.—She, to whoſe mind early ſorrow had given early ripeneſs, was unuſually domeſtic and companionable.—Her having no great compaſs of acquired knowledge, or powers of imagination, was rather an advantage in our retirement, becauſe ſhe could attend to common things, and be intereſted in ſuch occurrences, as a perſon ſoaring in the balloon of romantic elevation could not deſcend to.—Then ſhe has a very pleaſing vein of humour, which I would call peculiar, but that it in ſome degree reſembles Caro's.—She has not his ſingular vein of delicate irony, but rallies very like him;—and, like him too, is very much awake to the ludicrous, and very quick-ſighted in detecting all pretenſions; and, like him, is invariably true, neither deceived nor deceiving.—Sound judgement indeed is the *forte* of theſe relations.—When I take a flight into the ideal world it muſt be a ſolitary

tary one.—People at her age are generally too much engroſſed with views and ſchemes for that new ſcene which ſeems to open wide and boundleſs before them in the world, to ſettle their giddy minds to that calm and rational enjoyment which time and experience teach us to value.—She is always preſent, and at home, hopeleſs of admiration.—I was not bewildered in the uſual way, but, loving as I did, an occaſional excurſion beyond this cloudy region, I think I too could always claim the merit of ſitting very quiet in the chimney-corner. —Indeed I find that tranquillity of temper very uſeful in the lot which Providence has appointed for me.—This is not the region of ſelect ſociety, yet by no means lonely. One meets with people willing to pleaſe, not deficient in point of underſtanding, and having manners ſuperior to expectation, when you conſider every thing.—I ſhould perhaps enjoy their ſociety more, if what I have at home were leſs pleaſing. No one

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can be more ſenſible than I am of the advantage I poſſeſs in this reſpect.—Yet there is no perfection.—Affection, delicacy, and diſcernment may have their exceſſes.—As there is no pure happineſs in this region of ſhadows, mine is not without alloys and interruptions; not merely ſuch as are common to every one, but ſome peculiarly my own. - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - and yet my advantages are ſuch as I ſhould be wretched without; and my drawback ſuch as I can bear without repining, and truſt, in time, to conquer without any mighty effort.—Alas! how ſadly does my reluctant heart aſſent to your too juſt obſervation!—This is, indeed, the time our children will afford us moſt pleaſure.—Should wealth and honour be ſcattered on their paths, ſhould their merit attain diſtinction and applauſe from ſurrounding multitudes, ſtill they will be weaned from our arms, never more to dwell in them with pleaſure, and depend on us for happineſs; never more

will

will they read their hopes and fears, their rewards and punishments, in our eyes.—O, happy obscurity! that hides the future from us; happy they who are not appointed to drain the dregs of life, to outlive those they love, or, what is ten times worse, to see them become unworthy of that love!—"Spare my eyes, my heart the last."—Adieu!

LETTER CXVIII.

TO MRS. S.

FORT GEORGE, JULY 30, 1786.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE been long meditating a stroke at your sixpence, but still deferred it till I should leave home, and reach this haven of tranquillity; Where, amidst the sound of fifes

fifes and drums, and ſmall arms, I ſeek that quiet and leiſure which I look for in vain amidſt the more diſcordant tumults of the nurſery;—where the thorough baſs of the bull and the old ſow from without, and the ſhrill treble accompaniment of the pigs and poultry, form a complete anti-concert.—Not that I mean to complain of the country, for (jeſting apart) I never enjoyed it more than I did this paſt ſummer, notwithſtanding the conſtant fatiguing exertion which my ſituation demands.—You, who are the repoſitory of all my complaints, know very well what a wretched invalid I was all laſt winter; but the ſpring, the ſun, and health returning all together, and that ſo mild and ſweet a ſpring as I never ſaw in this northern climate, you cannot think how ſuddenly I benefited from its reviving and gladdening influence. —Then my little boy, the fineſt creature you ever ſaw, began to run about earlier than any I ever had, and, from being a trouble, became a pleaſure

and

and amuſement to the whole family.—My eldeſt came down here in May, where he is to remain, being the darling of his grandfather's affections; ſo that we have none to diſturb us but the two girls and little *pickle*. ——We had the warmeſt brighteſt ſummer imaginable; and when the buſy cares of day were done, we uſed to ſaunter every evening, by Spey, till eleven o'clock, through meadows *literally* flowery, for you never ſaw ſuch a luxury of ſweets. There too

" Quiet waters ſoft and flow,
Along the verdant landſcape flow."

It was then and there that we taſted, with the higheſt reliſh, the true enjoyment of minds detached from the world, may I add, ſomewhat raiſed above it.—" In that kind ſchool, where no proud maſter reigns, the full free converſe of the mutual heart, improving and improved."—But need I deſcribe this kindly intercourſe to you, who underſtand it ſo well, and who love, as much as I do, to cheriſh the remembrance

of ſcenes and converſations never to be recalled, but always to be regretted;—where that love of ſincerity, of nature, and of virtue, which charmed and united us, expanded our hearts, and excluded the ſcandal, tittle-tattle about faſhions and coxcombs, and jealous malignity, which ſo frequently engroſs the tête-à-têtes of miſſes in and out of their teens.—You know me made of digreſſions, and will therefore excuſe this long one.—After being ſo long ruſticated, and uſed to quite a different manner of life, and ſtyle of converſation, you cannot imagine how I was ſtruck with the difference, in manners, dreſs, and language, between the people I found here and thoſe whom I left behind.—I ſpeak ſingularly, for Mr. G. is not with me.—We are building a new church, and an addition to our cottage, for the reception of theſe new comers who viſit us ſo frequently, I mean the *bairns*.—When my mate left me he parted with ſuch reluctance, and ſo many charges

charges of quick return, that he reminded me of Milton's Adam on the fatal morning of the tranſgreſſion. — To return to the garriſonians. You can imagine no ſet of people more poliſhed, powdered, *tonified* and *engliſhed*, than they are.—That rage for elegance, that paſſion for ſhew, that frenzy for falſe refinement and artificial luxury, which marks the age, burns here in full ardour.—No wonder when it has baniſhed decorum, regularity, and decent frugality from the ſober haunts of commerce, and even obtruded itſelf, with all its diſquiets and dangers, into the more ſacred aſylums of rural tranquillity, that this paſſion triumphs here, where it has nothing to obſtruct its progreſs; for the permanent parts of the community are ſo very idle, and ſo much accuſtomed to the company of a ſucceſſive variety of military beaux, who arrive with freſh cargoes of vanity and faſhionable impertinence, that the ladies here are as great adepts in the modiſh chit chat, the

modiſh games, &c. as any of their ſiſters in Groſvenor-ſquare.—Add to this, an aſſumed vivacity, and continual pretenſion to wit, ſupported by a mechanical giggle, which every one has equally at command.—This, no doubt, is a caricature, which the ſplenetic turn of reflection, produced by retirement, with a ſickly habit, has aggravated.—But now for the reverſe of the medal.—Theſe people are certainly pleaſant, eaſy, and elegant, though not totally free of affectation.—Then, conſidering they are ſo entirely unoccupied, and living ſo much together, 'tis wonderful to obſerve the harmony that prevails, and the decorum they obſerve towards each other.—Even in abſence, they have, upon the whole, leſs malignity and ſlander than any ſmall ſociety I ever knew or heard of. Though they have not warmth for real and tender friendſhip, yet their manners are ſo far ſmoothed and ſoftened by that politeneſs, which is the ape and ſubſtitute of benevolence, that they

they keep all rancour within decent bounds. —Indeed they float down the tide of diſſipation ſo quick, from one wave of amuſement to another, that they cannot be much in earneſt in their love or their anger.— You will wonder who theſe reſidents are.— They conſiſt of the ſtaff, four invalid companies, and a company of artillery.—Dear peaceful home! where all is native and unſophiſticated. This will make me more ſenſible of the value of my dominion there. - - - - - - - - - - I have at laſt written to H. ſince my arrival here.—I only deferred in hopes of ſending ſome trifles, which might be ſerviceable. - - - - - - - You know ſhe is in one ſenſe very proud, and ſo are all people of great delicacy.

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I never repined at my lot for want of any luxury, but the divine one of beſtowing where I love. - - - - Tell her what ſhe will ſcarce believe, ſo jealous are the unfortunate, that ſhe is as dear to me as ever,

though I have not the means to convince her of it.—Tell me what ſort of being Willy has choſen to divide his heart and loaf with. I have a line from my ſovereign juſt now, upbraiding my delay, and charging me to meet him in his own Strathſpey. I will ſtay there ſome days, having a grand viſit to make. As for the ſtate of the multiplication that you are ſo witty on, your connexions will increaſe about Chriſtmas.—Adieu!

LETTER CXIX.

TO MRS. S.

LAGGAN, JULY 20, 1787.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

WHEN I received your laſt letter I was juſt ſetting out for Fort A.; and, in the firſt lively emotions of pleaſure and gratitude,

tude, fixed my reſolution, immoveably as I thought, to ſnatch that interval to write you full, freely, as I uſed to do. I plead guilty to your accuſation. But you have no idea of the preſſure of my occupations, and what an engroſſer I have to pleaſe, and what a very good right he has to be attended to, who makes my happineſs the firſt object in all things.—Of courſe I took the infant with me; yet this jaunt, from which I propoſed to myſelf ſo much pleaſure and ſatisfaction, turned out very diſappointing, from the ſhort time I had to ſtay—one little fortnight, much of which was waſted in receiving and returning tireſome viſits of form.—I delighted, however, to ſee how much my weeping willows and roſe-buſhes had grown, in the favourite little garden fronting the Oich, which I was permitted to call my own.—We were vexed too with wrangling about the time of our ſtay, which the good old people wiſhed to protract to three months; but our affairs

would admit of no more than a fortnight.—This difficulty was eaſily ſettled with them.—It was but Caro's going home, and my ſtaying behind him.—Judge how this propoſal was reliſhed by people who ſhrink from the idea of a week's ſeparation.—Finally we came home, and left our people as much diſpleaſed with our ſhort ſtay as if we had not come at all.—The ſtruggle was to part with the dear grandchild.—No wonder, for it is really a fine one. Think, now, what a teacher I am, and what a pupil ſhe is, to ſhake hands when deſired already, not being four months old:—Did you ever hear of any thing ſo tractable and ingenious?—I dare ſay ſhe will offer her foot too in a month, and twenty other tricks, which a good ſagacious puppy would learn in half the time.—Such are mothers.—Before we can ſee even the dim dawn of reaſon to admire in our children, we pique ourſelves on the buddings of that inſtinctive faculty which creatures in a lower ſcale of being poſſeſs

in

in a ſuperior degree.——I found my old friends as I left them at Fort A.; only diſſenſions and diſcord ſtrengthening apace.—Querulous they are beyond enduring; every one has ſome diſmal tale to tell of the other; and, what is worſt, I fear the tales are often true.—What a dreadful evil idleneſs is to people of ſtarved intellects!—If I lived here again, I would by all means have them play cards, that there might be ſome central point of union, and that they might be leſs at leiſure to nurſe the gloomy progeny of malevolence.—O, if people would but love each other! I have told you formerly this place is the miniature of a court, which you have often heard is the ſeat of envy, jealouſy, detraction, and intrigue,—varniſhed with the ſpecious gloſs of artificial politeneſs and inſidious frankneſs.—How I, who underſtand them too well, was wearied of their little arts!—How doubly diſguſting do they appear to me after having lived ſo long in the

very boſom of innocence, affection, and tranquillity; where all around me breathes the ſpirit of ſimplicity and truth!—Short was the time left me for domeſtic enjoyment; yet theſe few hours, and a few more that I ſpent in rambling with *Cano* through our old ſweet wood haunts, were all I paſſed agreeably.—Now I have made a great exertion; and write you muſt, fully.—What ſhould hinder you, who are miſtreſs of yourſelf and your time?—If you did but know how often my heart is with you, you would not think much of the trouble of pouring out yours to me.——You muſt have obſerved the untimely death of Lord L. and very ſingular manner of it.—Thus, ſuddenly, has that accompliſhed wretch been hurried away from the midſt of his riotous pleaſures, and in him, I think, is extinguiſhed the name and memory of his worthy father.—They ſay the old lord's death was haſtened by the ſorrow which his ſon's vices occaſioned.—We ſhould ſay, if the ſtory of the father,

ſon,

ſon, and daughter-in-law, were told in a novel, that it was improbable, and quite out of nature; yet, true it is, that this gay licentious nobleman, in early youth, and in the full career of his pleaſurable purſuits, was deeply ſmitten with the humble, retired, and ſentimental Mrs. P. That ſhe ſhould marry him is very wonderful indeed. —Yet, notwithſtanding this capital flaw in the unity of her character, I have taken it into my head, from her letters, and the account of a lady who was here, and who knew her in Worceſterſhire, that ſhe was very like your ladyſhip.—Do not be angry; for though we may glide eaſily through the calm vale of life, and wonder what leads others into the ſnares of ambition, 'tis a degree of preſumption in us to ſay we would ſpurn at ſuch ſplendid temptations as are never likely to come in our way.—Yet I do not impute to ſo pure a mind as that of Mrs. P. the groſs blunder of ſacrificing eaſe, independence, and delicacy to the

mere deſire of ſhining in a more elevated ſtation.—No. I think ſhe was urged by the ambition of reclaiming, to the paths of honour and virtue, a character already diſtinguiſhed by all that excites admiration.—To ſet domeſtic life, and all its train of mild endearing pleaſures, in the faireſt light before him, and recal his taſte for what was truly excellent, was her object; and to this ſhe appears to have ſacrificed every other conſideration.—Her error was a very common, yet very great, one; and very deeply ſhe atoned for it.—She died in the prime of life of a broken heart.—Neglected by her old friends, and moſt unjuſtly deſpiſed by her new connexions, fulfilling her own conditional prediction, in the fine fable which you know ſhe addreſſed to her father-in-law.—I am very angry at my old paſtor and his mate; they were here on their way to K. a week ago, and promiſed to call on their way back, and did not. And now I hear you and Jenny blaming me for not writing,

writing, and ſaying I give myſelf airs of a buſy matron, &c. &c.—Adviſe A. to have regard to his veracity. The ſeaſon is ſliding away inſenſibly, and 'tis only in fine weather that this country is tolerable to ſtrangers, though we literally

"Love our mountains, and enjoy our ſtorms."—

He had the confidence to write without ſaying a word of coming.—I fancy he means to take conſequence from ſurpriſing us. He is miſtaken. For, to his utter mortification, we never are ſurpriſed.—Alas! poor Mrs. O.!—I never ſaw ſo charming a boy as that ſhe loſt.—She needed not this to embitter her other griefs.—I ſend you the genuine complaint of a real mourner on a ſimilar occaſion. I think I promiſed it to you before.—I conclude after all, in haſte, begging you to offer my loves and compliments where you know them to be due, from your own unaltered ——

LETTER CXX.

TO MRS. S.

LAGGAN, AUG. 27, 1787.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THE long lint-houſe letter you promiſed me is not yet arrived.—I have been for a month at my *lint-houſe*, alias Fort George; where, being in ſome meaſure diſengaged from the perpetual hurry which always ſurrounds me at home, I find leiſure to gratify the ſtrong inclination I always feel, to write to you.—Taking it for granted, that, in the preſent caſe, you not only excuſe but require egotiſm, I will endeavour to explain to you the nature of that buſtle, and perplexity of affairs, which I complain of ſo often, and ſo juſtly.—Having a great deal to do is not altogether the

the thing; that, too, abridges my time for amuſements of this nature; but 'tis having a great deal to think of, to contrive, and to plan out, that plagues me. 'Tis acting in a variety of characters and capacities ſcarce compatible with each other.—I muſt, after ſeven years experience, confeſs, with deep mortification, and due reverence for that exalted character, that the perſon who would be a notable houſewife, muſt be that individual thing only, and not mar the main affair by an attempt to introduce ſeparate and ſubordinate excellencies.— She muſt not even, in any ſenſe, be a tender wife, or attentive mother. She muſt not walk about with her huſband, or be his evening companion in converſation or other amuſements; ſhe muſt not ſpend her time in inſtructing her children, nor attend to the forming of their minds; their food, cloathing, and health is all ſhe muſt attend to.— You, Lowlanders, have no idea of the complicated nature of Highland farming, and

of

of the odd cuſtoms which prevail here.—Formerly, from the wild and warlike nature of the men, and their haughty indolence, they thought no rural employment compatible with their dignity, unleſs, indeed, the plough.—Fighting, hunting, lounging in the ſun, muſic, and poetry, were their occupations: for the latter, though you would not think it, their language is admirably adapted.—This naturally extended the women's province both of labour and management.—The care of the cattle was peculiarly theirs.—Changing their reſidence ſo often as they did in ſummer, from one bothy or glen to another, gave a romantic peculiarity to their turn of thought and language. Their manner of life, in fact, wanted nothing but the ſhades of palm, the olives, the vines, and the fervid ſun of the eaſt, to reſemble the patriarchal one.—Yet, as they muſt carry their beds, food, and utenſils, the houſewife, who furniſhes and divides theſe matters, has enough to do when her

ſhepherd

ſhepherd is in one glen, and her dairy-maid in another with her milk-cattle.—Not to mention ſome of the children, who are marched off to the glen as a diſcipline, to inure them early to hardineſs and ſimplicity of life.—Meanwhile, his reverence, with my kitchen damſel and the ploughman, conſtitute another family at home, from which all the reſt are flying detachments, occaſionally ſent out and recalled, and regularly furniſhed with proviſions and forage.—— The effect, you know, often continues when the cauſe has ceaſed; the men are now civilized to what they were, yet the cuſtom of leaving the weight of all cares on the more helpleſs ſex continues, and has produced this one good effect, that they are from this habit leſs helpleſs and dependent. —The men think they preſerve dignity by this mode of management; the women find a degree of power or conſequence in having ſuch an extenſive department, which they would not willingly exchange for inglorious

eaſe.

eaſe.—What theſe occupations are you cannot comprehend from a general deſcription; but, as it is an hour to breakfaſt-time, and I find myſelf in the humour of journalizing and particularizing, I ſhall, between fancy and memory, ſketch out the diary of one July Monday. I mention Monday, being the day that all dwellers in glens, come down for the ſupplies.—Item, at four o'clock, Donald arrives with a horſe loaded with butter, cheeſe, and milk.—The former I muſt weigh inſtantly.—He only aſks an additional blanket for the children, a covering for himſelf, two milk tubs, a cog, and another ſpoon, becauſe little Peter threw one of the ſet in the burn, two ſtone of meal, a quart of ſalt, two pounds of flax for the ſpinners, for the graſs continues ſo good that they will ſtay a week longer.—He brings the intelligence of the old ſow's being the joyful mother of a dozen pigs, and requeſts ſomething to feed her with.—All this muſt be ready in an hour; before the

the concluſion of which comes Ronald from the high hills, where our ſheep and young horſes are all ſummer, and only deſires meal, ſalt, and women with ſhears, to clip the lambs, and tar to ſmear them.—He informs me that the black mare has a foal, a very fine one; but ſhe is very low, and I muſt inſtantly ſend one to bring her to the meadows before he departs. The tenants who do us ſervices come; they are going to ſtay two days in the oak wood, cutting timber for our new byre, and muſt have a competent proviſion of bread, cheeſe, and ale for the time they ſtay. Then I have Caro's breakfaſt to get, Janet's hank to reel, and a baſket of clues to diſpatch to the weaver, K—'s leſſon to hear, her ſampler to rectify, and all muſt be over before eleven; while his reverence, calm and regardleſs of all this buſtle, wonders what detains me, urging me out to walk, while the ſoaring larks, the ſmiling meadows, and opening flowers, ſecond the invitation; and

my

my imagination, if it gets a moment looſe from care, kindles at theſe objects with all the eagerneſs of youthful enthuſiaſm. My tottering conſtitution, my faded form and multiplying cares, are all forgotten, and I enjoy the pauſe from keen exertion as others do gaiety and mirth.—How happy, in my circumſtances, is that verſatile and ſanguine temper, which is hoping for a rainbow in every cloud; nay, ſo prevalent is this diſpoſition, that were a fire to break out in the offices, and burn them all down, I dare ſay the firſt thing that would occur to me, would be to conſole myſelf by conſidering how much ground would be manured by all theſe fine aſhes.—Now I will not plague you with the detail of the whole day, of which the above is a competent ſpecimen. Yet ſpare your pity; for this day is ſucceeded by an evening ſo ſweetly ſerene, our walk by the river is ſo calmly pleaſing, our lounge by the burnſide ſo indolently eaſy, our converſation in the long-

wiſhed

wiſhed hour of leiſure ſo intereſting, ſliding ſo imperceptibly from grave to gay, and then our children;—ſay you wiſh me more eaſe and leiſure, but do not pity me.—Pity with me is like advice with ſome. I am readier to give than to take it. Adieu! dear and true friend.—

LETTER CXXI.

TO MRS. S.

LAGGAN, AUGUST 7, 1788.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HOPE this will find you ſafely arrived in town with your mate, and relieved from all apprehenſions about the *ſon of your love.* —I have no doubt but your dear little ſufferer has gone through much diſtreſs; but your great timidity of temper makes me hope

hope you have, in fancy, aggravated the danger. I rejoice to think you are ſo partial to all my dear retreats,—to Spey, to Corryarrick, and, above all, to the Lord of the Cottage.—I ſhould not have died in peace unleſs you had ſeen and liked us all. —I am quite gratified to think how much you pleaſe him. — Nature, delicacy, and gentleneſs, is all in all to him. He revolts at every ſhadow of affectation, and detects pretenſions with a glance.—I dare ſay, in his whole lifetime, he never ſaid a word, the intention of which was to bias any one's opinion in his favour.—You muſt like him as he is, or not like him at all. But I was ſure you would and muſt like him; never were two unpretending beings more congenial in their manner of thinking.—He was extremely partial to your letters before he ſaw you.—You and he too have this in common, that you both appear to moſt advantage on paper, where your diffidence does not ſtand in your way. He admires

my application of Collins's Addreſs to Simplicity to you, and ſays you really are

" By nature taught
To breathe her genuine thought,
In language warmly pure, and ſweetly ſtrong."—

Now the leaſt thing you can do in return for all this, is to tell me how well your beloved likes me, and the cottage, and ſo forth.—What an ingrate he muſt be, if not partial to the wife of one that likes his wife ſo well, eſpecially when the lady in queſtion is ſo well diſpoſed towards him.—My dear, we ought, as Caius ſays of Dr. Evans in the play, "to pray our pibles well" that matters happened as they did. Nurſing our delicacy and our affection as we did, in tender friendſhip and voluntary retirement, cultivating our taſte to a degree which circumſtances might have rendered very inconvenient, we ſhould have been wretched caitiffs had men fallen to our lot ſuch as the generality of our friends are very well ſatisfied with.—For my own part, I could never have

have endured groſſneſs, or indifference, or twenty things, that I ſee better people put up with, who do not ſeem to think there is the ſmalleſt occaſion for common taſtes and inclinations.—In ſuch a caſe, I think, "I would never tell my *hate*;" but I dare ſay concealment would, like an envious worm, "feed on my meagre cheek."—Alas! how I play with a ſubject that ſhould touch us both very nearly, when we think on her who has full as much feeling and delicacy as any of us, who always ſuffers and never complains! — With her diſpoſition ſhe would be too happy had ſhe met, like us, with gentleneſs, attention, and indulgence. —"Turn, hopeleſs thoughts, turn from her."—Your other letter is come, and I am ſo pleaſed.—I began to fret and to wonder, and my very Caro, who hates impatience, began to look ſolemn and ſignificant, and wonder if you were well.——Theſe poſt-horſes are brutes void of all finer feelings; and ſo far from improving by the literary commerce

commerce they are the means of carrying on, they ſeem inſenſible of the loads of information, conſolation, and ratiocination they carry on their backs, and will not budge a foot faſter to relieve even the impatience of lovers.—For inſtance, your letter was full ſixteen days on the way.

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All this is very like the days of yore; but I am ſo elated at hearing all is well, that I have run into our old ſtyle of ludicrous trifling, with moſt unmatronly giddineſs.—Your god-daughter came home from nurſing yeſterday.—Her ſiſter is delighted with the acquiſition. The little one is like a young moor-fowl, ſo lively, wild, and ſhy.—But I ſhall ſoon tame and civilize her.—I am ſure you will be glad to hear that we have a delightful proſpect of a fine harveſt, flax in abundance, potatoes, your favourites, in ſuperabundance, and "the breezes wave the ripening corn" in profuſe luxuriance.—But then you will be ſorry again to hear,

that, for a few days paſt, all this fair promiſe of plenty was like to be drenched in floods of rain, and overwhelmed with the ſwelling of Spey. However, you muſt be glad again to hear that this is only the equinoctial, or, as the good lady who affected hard words ſaid, *anti nuptial*, ſtorm, and that we ſtill hope for good weather to enable us to rejoice in the bleſſings of Providence. Mr. G. joins in affectionate good wiſhes to your lord. I have no room or time for other remembrances; but, while I can think, I ſhall be faithfully yours.

LETTER CXXII.

TO MRS. S—H.

LAGGAN, SEPT. 5, 1788.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE juſt had the pleaſure of your ſhort, and Mrs. B.'s longer, letter.—You have not been good *bairns* this ſummer.—Have you not the grace to conſider this is my hurried ſeaſon? Could I command time, you would be teazed with my redundancies.—Indeed I have nothing to ſend you from here very intereſting to town belles.—Yet what maketh us to differ, to uſe Mrs. Hervy's appoſite phraſe, if we, with our long-eſtabliſhed friendſhip, find no more to intereſt us in each other than people incapable of that generous ſentiment?—Why is ſpleen, or, to uſe a more

faſhionable word, *ennui*, the peculiar diſeaſe of fine ladies and fine gentlemen, but becauſe they, of all mortals, cannot have their minds ſtirred up, and kept in motion, by any thing but what relates to their darling ſelves?—Avarice and vanity are the paſſions which, by turns, ſway and agitate them.—The card-table exerciſes the one, and a rotation of public places, filled, as they think, with their admirers, the other.—Languor, apathy, and the horrors, fill up, by turns, the diſmal interval.—How different is the caſe with thoſe whom the polite world regards with pity, as beings loſt in oblivion, &c. &c. becauſe their cares and pleaſures are confined to their own family and particular friends!—Yet how animated, how endearing, is that circle to thoſe capable of taſting it with unvitiated reliſh, with genuine truth, and warmth of feeling!—The eye cannot turn without meeting with the expreſſion of reverence, ſympathy, or tenderneſs, in ſome counte-

nance

nance we love; the moſt ordinary occurrence excites hopes and fears, pleaſure or diſquiet, becauſe it muſt, in ſome degree, affect thoſe who engroſs and animate our wiſhes.—Haymaking is not merely drying graſs; it is preparing a ſcene of joyous employment, and innocent amuſement for thoſe whoſe ſports recal to us our gayeſt happieſt days.—Planting is not merely raiſing ſhrubs or trees, ſo familiar that they excite no new pleaſurable idea, it is preparing ſhelter, and unfolding beauties, for thoſe human bloſſoms, whoſe dawning ſweetneſs, whether real or imaginary, we contemplate with blameleſs rapture.—— Excuſe this rhapſody. 'Tis an attempt at contraſting a life of what is thought harmleſs diſſipation, with that peaceful privacy, where the voice of the heart is heard, and attended to.—Why do you not tell me what kind of a wife Jenny makes?—whether ſhe takes matronal conſequence to herſelf,—who that was ill is grown better, and who

that was wicked has repented; who has begun to go to ſermons on week days, and who has left off attending them on ſundays?—We have been, by turns, ſo moral and playful, that now our name is up, if we ſhould deal a little in cenſure and tittle tattle, we can go on, and keep our credit, on the ſtrength of paſt good behaviour.—Where is Dunlop-ſtreet, and what ſort of a houſe have you in it, and do you ſtill keep Watts on the Paſſions beſide you, by way of precaution, and do you continue your laudable attention to the *wee* prophets, or do you not rather tell them, in theſe buſy days, that, "at a more convenient ſeaſon, you will hear them?"—You ſee how preſent, all paſt mirth and ſorrow, ſports and ſerioufneſs, is to me; yet you will gravely talk of my neglecting you, ungrateful beings as you are.—

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I give you this commiſſion, to me important, becauſe, I think, if a ſuitable place could

could be found for my charge, ſhe might improve in many reſpects, and I ſhould flatter myſelf that going now and then to public places, and aſſociating with other young people, will cheer her dejected ſpirits, and prevent her taking a turn too thoughtful for her age.—I would wiſh her to paſs four or five months in town, and return to me in ſpring.—Adieu! in haſte, my dear friend.—Mr. G. has learnt to think of you as I do, and ſends his love. Diſpoſe of mine where you know it due. Farewell again.

LETTER CXXIII.

TO MRS. S—H.

MAY, 16, 1789.

"PITY me, O my friend! for the hand of God hath touched me;"—touched me to the very quick, and that in a manner ſo

utterly unexpected, I feel ſtill like a perſon ſtunned by a thunder-bolt, beginning to pant for breath, and look about to ſee what I have left, and to feel what I have loſt.—I know I need not have recourſe to declamation to intereſt your tendereſt ſympathy. You knew the dear creature it has pleaſed the Almighty to deprive me of was my pride and my delight.—The ſpirit and animation of that fine countenance no one ever beheld without being ſtruck with its marked expreſſion, and that fair promiſe of every human excellence which dawned through every word and action, his fond parents viewed with ſecret exultation!—Aſk Charlotte if I exaggerate, or if ever ſhe ſaw ſuch manlineſs, generoſity, and tenderneſs appear in a child. There was nothing he dreaded like giving me a moment's pain. O! what have we loſt?—but what has he eſcaped by this early removal?—Ripening, as he was, for immortality, he lived more in theſe four ſhort years than moſt

moſt children do in ten.—He walked, ſpoke, thought, and felt ſooner than any child I ever ſaw or heard of.

" Why wanders wretched thought about his tomb,
In infidel diſtreſs?"—

I know the vanity of theſe fond, fooliſh recollections. I know how well it becomes a chriſtian to render his own gifts meekly to the Divine Giver, when demanded.—This, and a great deal more, is often and eaſily ſaid.—Nay, I could ſay it all myſelf, but nature will have her way.—When Mary II. of England was on her death-bed, early finiſhing a pious and exemplary life with a ſuitable concluſion, ſhe, having been aſked if any of the various remedies ſhe took did her good, anſwered, that nothing did her good but prayer.—I may ſay ſomething like this; but, alas! my efforts to ſeek this relief are, like my dear child, cold, dead, inanimate!—the heart ſpeaks not, moves not, under the oppreſſive weight.—Here is great room for cenſure. Be it ſo. It is

not your approbation, but your ſympathy, that I ſolicit. When I wrote laſt I dreaded the meaſles; John took them, but very favourably; we had not the leaſt apprehenſion for this darling. - - - - - - - - - -

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Excuſe my dwelling on minutiæ ſo dear to my remembrance. —— Yet how ſhall I ſpeak of the three following days?—or, how procure ſome oblivious draught, to waſh them for ever from my remembrance? —The unſpeakable pains he then endured ſtill preſs upon my heart.—Yet he was ſenſible to the laſt minute, expreſſed pity and tenderneſs for us by words, and then by ſigns, when his ſpeech grew languid and imperfect.—As he became weaker he grew calm, and, at length, expired,

"As ſoft as balm, as mild as air."—

At ſix in the morning, May 12th, this human wonder forſook its earthly priſon, and mingled with its kindred angels.—We ſaw him

him depart without a tear.—Now we can weep, and that is ſome relief. O pray for us!—Adieu!——I pity poor Charlotte, to whom our beloved child was very dear, and ſhe thinks and feels deeper than moſt people.—I have announced *her* loſs to her, for ſuch I know ſhe conſiders it.

LETTER CXXIV.

TO MRS. S—H.

GLASGOW, MAY 26, 1789.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

WERE you as happy as your great worldly proſperity, the eſteem of all that know you truly, can make you, you would be very unfit to enter into the preſent feelings of my heart, theſe acute returns of pain, theſe agonizing recollections, that

darken the ſummer's ſun, and throw a veil of univerſal ſadneſs over the fair face of nature;——the recital of ſuch ſenſations would form poor entertainment for a perſon engroſſed or elated by the pleaſures and gaieties of this world.—Since writing the above, I am come to Fort George, by *particular deſire*; but, alas! I find, to my ſorrow, that change of place is only change of pain.—The regiment in which my father ſerved during the years of my childhood, and to which he is ſtill much attached, he imagined would intereſt me; but whether it be that the habit of a retired life has made me think differently from what I uſed to do, or that my mind is entirely engroſſed with one ſad and tender idea, I ſee them not as old friends, but merely as worldlings fluttering after trifles.—I am at home, after ſpending a dreary month at the Fort, without being awake to any thing but poor C.—We thought ſhe would be the better of change of air and ſalt water. Her rapid growth

enervates

enervates her. We have brought your relation home with us. - - - - - Charlotte will be home this week.—I am relieved at the thought of it.—To her I dare talk fully of what is ever in my thoughts.—With her I can venture to feed my inſatiable ſorrow with every little anecdote and recollection that will ſerve to keep his dear memory alive.—His father, though he cannot get over it himſelf, blames me very juſtly for repining at my darling's happineſs.—I will not be ſurpriſed or angry though you ſhould reprove me for this extravagance; but I am not well; and returning here, I find my beloved child's image in every place, in ſome of thoſe lively and ſtriking attitudes which were almoſt peculiar to himſelf.—I cannot go to the door without ſeeing the ſpot where the cold earth covers that lovely countenance, which I never could behold without an emotion of pleaſure, only exceeded by my preſent anguiſh. Happily I have preſerved his dear profile, taken when

he

he was out of humour.—His ſenſible frown adds ſtrength to the expreſſion of the moſt animated countenance I ever beheld.—I do not acknowledge your kindneſs to Charlotte. I do not anſwer a ſentence of your moſt affectionate letter, which I thankfully received a month ago.—I can ſpeak of nothing but the only thing I think of.—Do not think I neglect the only method of procuring true conſolation.——I earneſtly implore ſtrength to bear my ſorrows; but I am not able to pray, or wiſh, in any degree, to enable me to forget the object of it.—His remembrance is ſo ſweet to my ſoul, and my aſpirations after a re-union with him, where we ſhall part no more, are ſo conſequently ſtrong.—Pray read Dr. Gregory's Comparative View, &c., and obſerve particularly the laſt ſection on the influence of religion, that on taſte, and the ſtrictures on falſe refinement.—I long to have you ſhare the entertainment they afforded to my happier hours. A letter from

you

you is almoſt the only thing I could read now.—Write amply; give me good accounts of Mr. B—, and believe you are one of the few that ſtill intereſt me. Farewell!

LETTER CXXV.

TO MRS. S—H.

LAGGAN, AUGUST 3, 1789.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

WEEK after week has elapſed without my gratifying myſelf by writing to you, or being able to aſſign a good reaſon. I ſhall aſſign the true one; which, at the ſame time, I own I cannot juſtify.—When I received your letter, in which you animadvert, very juſtly, on the folly, not to ſay guilt, of waſting that time and thought in fruitleſs mourning for the dead, which

ought to be employed in useful attention, I was ashamed to discover the state of my mind even to you, and from you how could I conceal it?—Truth is, my mind has been either wound up to a pitch, at which it could not long remain, or sunk in the deepest dejection. - - - - - - - - - - -

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But in vain do I weary and exhaust my worn-out spirits in pursuit of a vision that eludes my grasp.—Alas! I must turn my eyes to objects more attainable, and more suited to my situation, and the ties that still hold me to this world.—I must again run the round of earthly cares and low pursuits, and wait patiently till my appointed day come.—For I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.—A late alarm, from another part of my family, convinced me forcibly of my own weakness and inconsistency.—The grief which I could neither soothe or reason down, grew more tolerable on being divided.—A bright atmosphere, a busy

buſy ſcene, and the affectionate attention of a pleaſing and eaſy companion, did more to relieve my mind than all that reaſon or reflection could ſuggeſt.—I always think of him, but with more compoſure.—I view him as having paſſed the fiery trial of ſuffering, and as regarding us with tender compaſſion.—The firſt thing that alleviated my diſtreſs was C—'s return, in itſelf pleaſing, but ſtill more gratifying, as her minute details about you all made you, in a manner, viſible and preſent to us.—This ſuſpended the ſenſe of pain, by renewing the pleaſing remembrance of the innocent happy hours we formerly paſſed together.—My youngeſt boy had got a hurt, the conſequences of which alarmed us, but he is now better.—Our buſy ſeaſon coming on, and finding myſelf incapable of any ſteady application within doors, I ſent his maid to the haymaking, and wandered out a good deal with him in my arms.—In conſequence of this exertion, I have found

found exercise in the open air operates beyond any thing towards the relief of depression of spirits.—Long may it be before you require any such remedy for that heaviest of evils.—I have been indeed very little within, till of late, that the bad weather has confined me.—I have thought much of what you say of a certain friend of mine being in danger of running into the extreme of enthusiasm; but, after all, cannot think the hazard very serious, though I have *paused* and *pondered* sufficiently on the subject.—The fact is, that it is in vain for us to flatter ourselves that the great work of our salvation is a bye concern, for which we may occasionally set aside a few minutes, that, by chance, are left vacant from business or pleasures.—This does not agree with the opinion which the wise and good in all ages, and of all persuasions, seem to have entertained. However different their degrees of light and intelligence, viz. that our manner of existing here is not the final

end

end of our being; that this is merely a ſtate of probation, in which there is a glimmering of light afforded us, barely ſufficient to diſtinguiſh good and evil; and a degree of choice and judgment, juſt enough to enable us to make a ſelection, and hold by the beſt.—Were our intellect ſtrong enough to diſcern the lucid order, and according harmony of the divine ſcheme of providence in its full extent,—could the horrors of guilt, and its conſequent puniſhment, be made viſible through the thick veil of humanity, or could weak mortal eyes bear the refulgence of celeſtial beauty, there could be no room for choice or heſitation, no exerciſe of fortitude, diſcernment, faith or hope, no ſtruggles betwixt the erring will and the love of rectitude.—Creatures left without choice, and impelled by the clear and glaring certainty before them, not ſtruggling up the hill to virtue and felicity, but ſwimming with the ſtream in torpid eaſe, could not exerciſe thoſe virtues our

imperfect

imperfect ſtate ſo loudly calls for.—All the nobler exertions, all the ſofter emotions, of the mind, loſe their meaning and their uſe where there is no vice to combat, no diſtreſs to relieve, no weakneſs to protect. All this is ſo like common-place, that you muſt conſider me as digreſſing very widely. —Yet the perpetual ſtruggle and warfare with guilt and ſorrow, which is evidently our appointed taſk and duty here, leaves little room to ſuppoſe that any body can be righteous over much. We ſee our duty imperfectly in this land of ſhades and apparitions.—Thus much, however, we are certain of, that we walk continually on the brink of danger in the open paths of life. —If not happier, thoſe are certainly ſafer, who, in ſome meaſure, fly from the conflict. —What do people purſue in the world but buſineſs or pleaſure?—The regulation of the mind, and the exertion of that active beneficence which true piety produces, form an occupation to a mind ſo turned, that

exerciſes

exerciſes all its faculties in the moſt agreeable manner with thoſe who have made great advances in piety. I ſhould ſuppoſe "perfect love caſteth out fear," and that theſe exerciſes become a ſource of pure and laſting pleaſure, as incomprehenſible to the children of this world, as colours to the blind.—Enthuſiaſm is the wine of life; it cheers and ſupports the mind; though exceſs, in either caſe, produces intoxication and madneſs.—I am not ſure that the religion of the heart can exiſt without a certain degree of enthuſiaſm.—(What noble or tender emotion of the mind is excited in any great degree without producing it? Very few affix a preciſe or determinate idea to the word, uſed in a religious ſenſe.) You will hear many people, who have never thought about the matter, parrottizing about enthuſiaſm, when they mean bigotry or fanaticiſm, if, indeed, they mean anything.—— Religion has not ſo great an enemy upon earth as vanity; and no wonder,

der, ſince true piety muſt needs be founded in deep humility.—Wealth, power, and diſtinction cannot be attained by all the vain and ambitious; but the prize of wit and wiſdom ſeems always within reach to thoſe determined to be wiſe or witty.—Thoſe who wiſh to purchaſe theſe diſtinctions as cheap as poſſible, exchange the principles they only ſeemed to poſſeſs, for the character of wit and talents they only ſeemed to acquire.—They hear impious wit oftenest quoted by the thoughtleſs and diſſipated, and, therefore, they think impiety neceſſarily implies wit, and are indeed very often incapable of diſtinguiſhing the one from the other.—Theſe are the people who ſo frequently talk with contempt and ridicule of enthuſiaſm, in the religious ſenſe of that expreſſion, as they *miſunderſtand* it.—I have been very ſerious, and, as generally turns out in that caſe, very tedious; but ſome late inſtances that I have met with, of abſurd pretenſions to wit, founded on ſtill more abſurd preten-

ſions-

ſions to infidelity, have really provoked me; eſpecially, as I very well know this pretender believes and trembles in the dark. For his impiety he muſt account to his Maker; but his impertinent oſtentation is an offence againſt ſociety.—I ſuppoſe you are very glad that I am going to bid you good night. I fancy you will think, after giving you this lecture on impiety, the next thing I ſhall ſet about will be to caution bees and ants againſt idleneſs, or our friend W. D. againſt too much gravity and auſterity.—I don't know whether you will be the better of reading this, but I am much the better of writing it, and that you will think a ſufficient apology. — Adieu! my dear; I have taken the declamation and left action to you.—Be ever what you have been, and I ſhall be at no loſs for an example to illuſtrate ſome of my ſage precepts.——

LETTER CXXVI.

TO MRS. S—H.

LAGGAN, OCT. 5, 1789.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAD a hurried letter from you more than a month ago.—Leſt I forget again to tell you, I have heard twice from Miſs O. ſince ſhe went to Glouceſterſhire, where ſhe is very happy with her aunt, to whom ſhe muſt be a great comfort.—The health and freedom ſhe enjoys in that peaceful retreat ſeem to have given a new turn to her ſpirits.—She is evidently more cheerful, and makes reflections on her ſituation ſimilar to your own.—Her invaluable friend has, I hope, by this time, received her at London.—I always forgot to tell you Mr. G—'s anſwer to your query, whether he had changed

changed his mind about never more going from home.—He bids me ſay he has been kiſſing his door-poſts ever ſince his return, and always finds his devotion to his houſehold gods much increaſed by any ſuſpenſion of the uſual worſhip.—Yet I doubt not the inducement of being able to carry theſe *teraphim* with him, might induce him to travel a good way in a given direction.—What a ſtroller I have been this ſummer!—When children came one at a time, I ſtaid at home, and attended to them with great care; now they come in pairs, I ſcamper away like a *hen* oſtrich, or a fine lady.—I begun my career by going to my father's in ſpring.—That was on buſineſs, and I only ſtaid two days.—You know where we met in June.—When I returned, I was obliged, in conſequence of an old engagement, to viſit ſome friends in the lower part of the country at a moſt beautiful place, about ten miles diſtance.—I left C. in the houſe of the paſtor there, whom you

have heard me mention as a perſon of fine taſte, ſuperior abilities, and extenſive information.—I ſhould have told how I happened, at this time, to go to Fort Auguſtus.—I have a couſin, who ſucceeded my father in his office there, and poſſeſſes a large farm in the neighbourhood. He had a moſt promiſing family growing up, and was very proſperous in the world, having fallen into the ſucceſſion of a ſmall eſtate ſince he came there.—But, lately, they met with the deepeſt affliction, in conſequence of having loſt, at one time, their favourite ſon and daughter, the one about eighteen, the other nineteen, years old.—Their father, always infirm and delicate, fell into a dangerous illneſs ſoon after, from which he is now ſlowly recovering.—Mr. G. had to go over to attend a church court, to be held there laſt week, and I accompanied him. We took an odd fancy for grave people ten years wedded, and, what was moſt to be wondered at, the propoſal was not mine, to whom

whom you would moſt readily impute it. It was to leave the vehicle and Angus at the foot of Corryarick, to come the circuitous road, which you may remember, while we took the ſhepherd's foot-path from the bridge, which, leading down a ſteep, where no carriage can venture, led into the long-known, dear-loved receſſes on the borders of the Tarſe, where the hazel-woods, the echoing drimen duie, and the charming waterfall that I have ſo often deſcribed to you, lay in our path.—Now you are not to ſuppoſe that we were ſo much of a Corydon and Paſtora as to come here for the mere purpoſe of enjoying ſylvan beauties, and reviving tender recollections.—It was humane, for it ſaved the poor horſe; it was prudent, for it ſaved near two miles; it was civil, for it managed our time and road ſo as to put it in our power to viſit our friends at Culachy, to whoſe abode this pathway was a ſhort cut.—But you have no idea of the wild beauties of this walk; their ſhades,

ſacred ſo often to contemplation and to friendſhip, have improved in ſolemnity and variety in the ten years interregnum.—When the triumvirate uſed to find ſuch pleaſure in haunting theſe deep retreats, the trees were not near ſo lofty, the incurſions of hunters were more frequent, the country was more populous; but now the coppice is become a grove, whoſe tenants have increaſed, conſcious of their ſafety.—Oh! that you could ſee theſe hazel-bowers, and the light feſtoons of wild honeyſuckle pendent from their topmoſt branches!—That you could hear the ſweet reſponſes of native muſic, the deep murmur of the dark and ſecret ſtream, and the myſterious echo of drimen duie!—Theſe are, indeed, like ſounds

> " Sent by ſpirits to mortals good,
> Or th' unſeen genius of the wood.—

Do you think we could paſs the beautiful rocky baſon I have ſo often told you of, where a little tributary ſtream falls in broken rills

rills down a ſteep rock, decked with fantaſtic tufts of flowers and nodding plants? —We did not paſs it, but ſtood awhile on the brink, recollecting the aſſociate of our wild wanderings, and the unequalled melody of the richeſt and melloweſt wood-notes that ever met my ear.—For here we uſed to reſt and liſten to "ſongs divine to hear," either ſuch plaintive notes as the "voice of Cona ſung," given in his native language, or our own ſweeteſt paſtoral lays, ſung with ſimplicity, taſte, and expreſſion, that will never meet again in theſe days of artifice.—

"O, loſt Ophelia, ſweetly flow'd the day,
To feel thy muſic with my ſoul agree,
To taſte the beauties of thy heartfelt lay,
To taſte, and fancy it was dear to thee!"

I could not help ſaying this to my companion here, where her image ſeemed to hover.—We paid the due tribute of tenderneſs to the memory of our hard-fated friend;—tenderneſs unmingled with regret, for we were pleaſed to think ſhe was eſcaped

this ſtate of probation. Her father, whom I have ſo often looked on with indifference, I regarded with unmixed compaſſion. Any thing ſo forlorn and helpleſs I have not ſeen. He ſeemed pleaſed to ſee me for her ſake, and tried, in trembling accents, to ſpeak of her.—My couſins ſeemed gratified by our viſit, and I was glad we made it.—I ſaw ſeveral people to whom I wiſh well, whom I ſhall probably never ſee again.—Then my mind was ſo eaſy with regard to the family, and the little Gemini, as C. had the entire charge of them, who is the very beſt deputy matron I ever knew.—You ſee I have made the moſt of this ſummer, being the firſt, ſince I was married, that I was not *very particularly* engaged at home.—Like Eve,

" So much of death my thoughts had entertain'd,
As dy'd my cheek with pale."—

It will refreſh you, after all this tragi-paſtoral, to hear that G. is married quite to his mind, and is the happieſt of human beings.

—Though

—Though no one had more the habits and notions of a confirmed batchelor, yet formed only for domeſtic life, he languiſhed in taſteleſs apathy, wanting he knew not what, for he was carefully taught to deſpiſe matrimony. He has got a very good little woman, with an eaſy temper, and juſt as much intellect as he would wiſh for, who loves him, and has brought him a fine child, in which he takes great pleaſure.—All this fills the void in his heart, and the vacancy in his time, that made him formerly moſt deplorably liſtleſs, though the beſt hearted creature imaginable.—A brother of his wife, who died abroad, has left her a pretty little fortune; ſo he has, every way, drawn a prize in the lottery of marriage.—Good connexions are not wanting, for the lady is one of Mr. G.'s hundred kinſwomen, and, conſequently, M. G. is now allied to us.—What a privilege!——Now that I have given you no brief abſtract of my ſummer campaign ſince I ſaw

you at our aſſignation in Canmore, you muſt needs do juſtice to my diligence in recording important tranſactions.—Though you ſhould not hear from me for half a year to come, theſe *commentaries* will bear witneſs of my unſhaken fidelity. Now let me hear you venture, after this, to ſay you have *nothing material.*—In return for theſe reveries of ſolitude you owe me ſomething from the buſy haunts of men.—Retirement at the Fairley is a mere pretence.—You go to be merry, and at eaſe, among your intimates, and then call it retiring.—We found all well at home, and the little *gemini* the fineſt amuſing little creatures;—how lucky for you that I am near the end of my paper, or they might

" Live in deſcription, and look *ſquat* in ſong;

for ſquat they both are, this moment, on the carpet. But I cannot " paint ere they change the Cynthia of the minute," though you ſhould take an intereſt in them as the favourite playthings of your affectionate friend!—

LETTER CXXVII.

TO MRS. S—H.

LAGGAN, JULY 2, 1790.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

BY a letter from Charlotte, while at Edinburgh, I find there is one from you on the way; ſo that I can write again without deſcending from my dignity;—and I can do this with the more eaſe of mind, as my little twins are now recovered from the ſmall-pox.—They are the beſt children I ever had, and very healthy and pleaſant looking.—My eldeſt girl is now ſtaying here, and your name-daughter with D— at the Fort.—

* * * * * * *

Theſe are the outlines, as far as I can draw them, of this triumvirate.—You ſmile, and

call it a panegyric.—Though very unlike each other in many reſpects, one characteriſtic feature of ſimilitude runs through them all.—They are all artleſs and diſintereſted: No traces of mean cunning or ſelfiſh graſping.—This is an indication of an enlarged mind; and, beſides the future promiſe, has a preſent good effect.—Whatever they have they ſhare with each other with readineſs and pleaſure; ſo there is one ſource of wrangling and debate ſtopped. They all give pretty ſtrong proofs of feeling as well as underſtanding; and it is by the management of theſe feelings that I propoſe, in a great meaſure, to ſway them till their minds open and ſtrengthen; ſo that one may reaſon with them without teaching them *parrotiſm*.—This, perhaps, might not be a ſafe way in the world; but, if ever children can be brought up with uncorrupted hearts, they have a chance of being ſo.—Their number, and being altogether ſtrangers to thoſe indulgences which wealth and eaſe admit

admit of, will entirely prevent their being ſoftened into a ſickly ſenſibility, by thoſe feelings being exerciſed.—For the art lies in directing them to thoſe ends for which it is preſumed they were beſtowed. In the firſt place, I am at the utmoſt pains to fix their affections; we ſhould be unhappy if we thought they loved any one near ſo well as their parents.—Indulgence will not produce this effect ſolely, for to that there muſt at laſt be limits; and a child who is very ſeldom refuſed any thing conſiders refuſal as injury.—When this happens oftener, the fear of being mortified makes him reflect before he makes any requeſt, whether it be a proper one.—One or two indulged children might be endured; but a large family of them would be Tophet and Gehenna.—The thing is, to endeavour early, ſo to manage their feelings and affections, that they ſhall ſhrink from the idea of giving pain to thoſe they love.—Having made ſure of their affection, the next point is to

ſecure

ſecure their eſteem, that it may ſtamp authority on my deciſions, and preſerve that reſpect ſo neceſſary for maintaining my influence.—Shall I confeſs to you, that the moſt finiſhed coquet was never at greater pains to appear to advantage before her lovers, than I am to conceal every defect and weakneſs from my children. Thus I endeavour, by exciting their veneration, to preſerve my aſcendancy over their flexible and unformed minds. My great object is to form their hearts to an ardent love of virtue, to a generous admiration of ſuperior excellence, and to compaſſion, not only for the weakneſſes but vices of their fellow creatures.—I would have them cheriſh thoſe pure and delicate ſentiments, which make the vices of others not appear to them as objects of acrimonious cenſure and ſelf-applauding compariſon; that they ſhall as habitually turn from the view of human nature thus degraded and deformed, as we do from any object that is peculiarly diſguſting

to

to our ſenſes. In that caſe, they will turn their eyes with pleaſure on every view of the human character that ſtill retains any traces of that divine image in which we were created.

" Tho' ſullied and diſhonor'd, ſtill divine."—

It is not by formal maxims, or frigid precepts, that we teach them the great doctrines of morality; yet we are continually in a powerful, though indirect, manner, impreſſing them on their minds.—I never forbid them formally to ſteal or covet, to envy or traduce, becauſe " they have the commandments," and are taught to reverence them as the dictates of inſpiration, and becauſe I never obſerved in them the leaſt ſymptom of a ſordid or malignant inclination. But in my general diſcourſe, in the converſation I have with their father, or others in their preſence, I always ſet the contrary virtues in the ſtrongeſt faireſt light; avoid, as much as poſſible, talking of other people's follies or crimes; and,

ſhould

ſhould they be caſually mentioned, paſs them lightly over with an air of indifference or diſguſt, not calculated to excite their attention or curioſity. 'Tis a ſad thing that children ſhould be taught, by the example of their ſeniors, to purſue vice into all its dirty receſſes, and triumph in our ſuperiority and diſcernment in making diſcoveries, that, when they are made, afford neither profit nor pleaſure.—I prefer the more pleaſing taſk of inſinuating inſtruction, and awaking the generous thrill of emulative deſire, by pointing out to their enamoured view all that is great, lovely, or excellent, in the characters of the living or the dead;—nay, even of thoſe that never lived or died, but in the creative imagination of poets and philoſophers.—Not but that I greatly prefer examples drawn from reality.—What is neceſſary to be known of evil, by way of guard or prevention, may be very ſoon acquired; for the whole world are in a combination to impreſs that kind

of

of inſtruction. — When I have warmed their hearts, and enriched their minds, with abſtracts of all that wiſdom and devotion, truth, honour, magnanimity, and tenderneſs have done to adorn and exalt our nature, I deſcend a ſtep lower in the ſcale of exiſtence, and make them obſerve and admire the fidelity, affection, maternal tenderneſs, attachment, and gentleneſs, which one meets with in little birds and domeſtic animals. All this helps to impreſs ſtill ſtronger on their minds the ſenſe I would have them entertain of theſe qualities wherever they meet them.—After thus endeavouring to give a right direction to that generoſity and tenderneſs with which it has pleaſed God to endow them, I would (though I know them myſelf) be at no great pains to teach them thoſe refinements in manners which it is become faſhionable to talk ſo much about.—The kind and degree of good breeding I ſhould moſt approve and wiſh for, will naturally reſult from a well

a well principled mind, a feeling heart, and a juſt and cultivated taſte.—Eſpecially when the manners of thoſe they look up to for examples are not devoid of that ſoftneſs, which delicacy of ſentiment always produces.—Forms and punctilio are the mere ſuperſtition of good breeding, eaſily acquired, and of little value.—The eaſe of faſhionable manners, the determined ſelf-confident eaſe, nothing but mixing much with faſhionable people can give: At leaſt I ſhould ſuſpect a little *native bronze* where it grew wild.—A perſon who, to a good, and, in ſome meaſure, cultivated, underſtanding, adds modeſty, gentleneſs, and ſome refinement of taſte, may not be elegant, but can ſcarcely be vulgar.—And ſuch manners may, by a ſlight culture, be improved into elegant ſimplicity, of all elegant things the moſt deſirable.—Though elegance ſhould prove unattainable, I would ſtill have that ſimplicity, both in their taſte and manners, which would be moſt ſuitable

to the humble ſtation in which Providence has placed them, and, at the ſame time, have their minds impreſſed with that true dignity which is compatible with any ſtation that one may ſuppoſe the daughter of a gentleman, in the ordinary courſe of life, either to riſe or ſink into. You know what my religious opinions are, and what unſpeakable importance I attach to them; ſo you may believe we are at all times anxious to leave this invaluable legacy unimpaired to thoſe who have ſo little beſide to inherit from us.—On theſe ſubjects you and I have but one opinion; and I am ſo unfaſhionable as to think one never can begin too ſoon to direct a child's hopes and fears to their proper and ultimate object; though reaſon muſt not be addreſſed till it unfolds, for fear of teaching children to uſe words without annexing ideas to them, which is juſt the parrotiſm that I diſlike.—You will wonder to ſee me dwell ſo much on cultivating the taſte, when I am ſuch an admirer

of

of undiſguiſed nature, but I reſpect taſte as an outguard of virtue; a juſt and regulated taſte would make the levity, the abſurdity, the cunning and meanneſs, which often accompany depraved inclinations, more obvious and diſguſting.—Beſides, it places every charm of all-beauteous nature, every grace and ornament of ingenious art, in the faireſt point of view, which has the happieſt effect upon the heart and temper.—Time and paper ſo confine me, that I muſt reſerve all that crouds on me to anſwer the objections you will naturally make to this mode of education.—My children, you will ſay, after being brought up to my wiſh, will be, after all, but amiable ignoramuſes, unacquainted with human life, and unable, from their extreme ſimplicity, to ward off the blows of malice, or avoid the ſnares of deceit.—Some acquaintance with human depravity, you will ſay, is neceſſary for enabling us to act with due caution in a corrupt world.—I anſwer, that they will find

too

too many inſtructors in this crooked ſcience, and know but too ſoon what every one is too willing and able to teach. Delicacy and a high principle is a better guard than cunning and ſuſpicion.—A perſon poſſeſſed of theſe, feels not at home or eaſy with artificial characters, and ſhrinks unconſciouſly from the approach of the callous and deſigning.—A large family is a little community within itſelf. The variety of diſpoſitions, the neceſſity of making occaſional ſacrifices of humour and inclination, and, at other times, reſiſting aggreſſion or incroachment, when properly directed by an over-ruling mind, teach both firmneſs and flexibility, as the occaſion may call forth the exerciſe of thoſe qualities.—Reſpect and ſubmiſſion to the elder branches of a family, tenderneſs and forbearance to the younger, all tend more to moral improvement, if properly managed, than volumes of maxims and rules of conduct.—With regard to modeſty and deference too, people

in

in our ſituation muſt needs enforce thoſe in ſelf-defence.—In a cottage, where children are continually under the eye of their parents, and confined within narrow bounds, petulance would be purgatory.—This detail of mine wants nothing but a little method and arrangement to be the ape of a lecture. —Regard, however, with indulgence, the haſty ſketch, which conveys to you ſome idea of the manner in which we endeavour to diſcharge the moſt important of all ſocial obligations, though a moſt confuſed and imperfect abſtract of our own very imperfect ſcheme. You will be partial to it, merely becauſe it is ours, if you are diſappointed,—my beſt apology muſt be reminding you how often you have ſolicited this brief chronicle.——Now reward my tedious blear-eyed vigil, by giving me as minute an account of your family as I have given you of mine.—Mr. G. begs to be warmly remembered to Mr. S., who, I truſt, has not forgotten that I can't endure

to

to be forgotten. I am charmed with the accounts I hear of Mrs. B.'s little family.—Make my love acceptable to her, and believe me, in ſpite of matrimony, diſtance, and Drimochter, moſt truly, moſt tenderly, yours.

LETTER CXXVIII.

TO MRS. S—H.

LAGGAN, JULY 26, 1790.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

AS I have no other method of inflicting puniſhment for your obſtinate continuance in ſins of omiſſion, I have taken this mode of impoſing a fine of eightpence upon you, beſides obliging you to read many egotiſms relative to a perſon about whom you ſeem to care very little.—Yet, why ſhould I thus reproach you, when you certainly wrote laſt?

laſt?—Beſides, I am impatient to acknowledge the ſenſe I have of a late exploit of yours, which to me who know you (as you yourſelf own) better than any one, is worth a hundred letters.—You gueſs that I mean your late excurſion to D., which I allow to be a gallant atchievement, and the real triumph of friendſhip and generoſity over prejudice and timidity, and coſt, I am ſure, more ſtruggle to ſurmount your little delicate reluctancies than ever it did a hero to conquer the fear of death on entering a breach.——Apropos of heroes, Somebody tells us no one appears a hero to his valet de chambre.—Now I have often obſerved to Mr. G. and Charlotte how different the caſe is with you.—It is only to your fille de chambre, and Jenny, and me, that you do appear a heroine, when cloſe intimacy unveils your very ſoul.—To the world you are "really a very good ſort of woman, very agreeable," &c. &c.; but they underſtand you not.—The modeſty of

your

your character, and ſimplicity of your manners, throw a miſt round you, which profane eyes cannot penetrate.—This forms one of your many points of reſemblance to Caro.—Yours is unmingled diffidence, but his is that high-toned delicacy that would ſcorn to be praiſed by thoſe who were not praiſeworthy. This is a moſt provoking digreſſion from myſelf, and the more ſo, as 'tis in praiſe of two odd beings that don't care for praiſe:—I ſuppoſe you both ſecretly feaſt upon ſelf-approbation.—Much good may it do your ſaucy ſouls.——Congratulate me on this effort at raillery, the firſt for a long time paſt.—I had begun to regain ſome degree of tranquillity, when I have been ſo ſtartled with the ſmall-pox coming cloſe upon us; and my dear little twins are teething, and I am ſo much afraid to inoculate them.—My recent wound of heart has left ſuch a ſenſible ſcar, that every ſcene of danger or diſtreſs in my family, renews the pangs I felt at beholding the

agonies of ſuffering innocence.—Alas! that retroſpect pains more than could any preſent diſtreſs. Theſe children are certainly finer creatures than uſual, and have all about them that can engage affection, or flatter partiality, at that early age; but I am no longer ſuſceptible of the fond enthuſiaſm that once engroſſed me:

" Deep buried in earth's cold embrace,
My ſoul's beſt treaſure lies,
And every beauty, every grace,
Forſakes theſe weeping eyes."—

Though my tranquillity, thank God, is in ſome meaſure reſtored, I am not, ſhall not be, what I was.—This event has changed the current of thought in a manner which none but myſelf can be ſenſible of.—I have loſt reliſh for ſolitude, and that rapture with which I once contemplated the beauties of nature has ſubſided.—To tell you a ſecret, 'tis almoſt a twelvemonth ſince I have gone out to ſee the moon walking in its brightneſs, or ſtood at the porch, in a fine

fine evening, to contemplate the mild ſplendour of the weſt, and the purple glow of the mountains on the ſun's departure. When I walk, 'tis mechanically, for health. Very entertaining all this to you.—Had I joy or proſperity to ſhare with any one, you ſhould certainly have a part of it; and you ſhould, therefore, know the taſte of this cup that is appointed for me to drink of ſo deeply.—

* * * * * * *

'Tis now the fourteenth day, and the infants are ſeemingly out of danger.—Mr. G. was in a ſad fright about them, particularly the eldeſt, who is a prodigious favourite. Charlotte would tell you of your ſpiritual relation,—what a gentle creature it is, &c.—This ſtupid letter, written by ſtarts, and concluded at the ſolemn midnight hour, will give you ſome notion how very willing I am to pleaſe, and, if I could, amuſe you; but I have a fancy that if a hen, with a flock of chickens, were to write letters,

they would be much like mine. Yet if you are gooſe enough to be pleaſed with ſuch letters, I ſhall even *cluck* on for your gratification, for you muſt not think 'tis for my own.—Adieu! affectionately.

LETTER CXXIX.

TO MRS. S—H.

LAGGAN, FEBRUARY 11, 1793.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I AM juſt recovering from an indiſpoſition ſo ſevere, that it would have robbed you of a correſpondent if it had continued much longer. This is a ſickly ſeaſon even amidſt theſe mountains, where the keen atmoſphere is ſo often agitated by ſtorms, as well as by the daſhing torrents, that it ſeldom ſtagnates into impurity. This, with the

the temperance and exercise which wholesome poverty produces, is the reason that death confines his ravages to infancy and declining age.——There are very few instances here of people dying in early youth; and, when they do happen, they seem objects of general concern and speculation.—Mr. G. had a relation, a young lady, remarkable for nothing but singular mildness, piety, and prudence.—Having been from her earliest youth subject to nervous affections, she became last winter quite emaciated and enfeebled, and, at last, died of a mismanaged rose fever, like sweet Petrina.—Yet every one insisted her death was caused by grief for the loss of her brother.—Another young creature, who has languished all this winter with similar complaints, is pronounced to be dying of love, though no mortal can say of whom. Thus primitive and romantic are the notions of our mountaineers.—I sincerely condole with you on the death of poor N. R. Who

would have thought that ſo much life would have been ſo ſoon expended?—I am really ſorry for that good-hearted creature W. A. Though a zealous ſtickler for my ſex on all occaſions, I muſt own that I ſympathize more with the forlorn and ſolitary ſtate of a widower, than a widow, ſuppoſing all other circumſtances equal.—I can forgive their marrying again much eaſier.—But a woman that has been happy in her firſt choice I conſider as mob, if ſhe marries again from any other motive than neceſſity. Now, indeed, I do not love mob, though found, as it often is, glittering with wealth, or even decorated with titles; and I love every thing that is anti-mob, though in rags. There is one thing that attaches me to this country: there is a *plentiful* lack of wealth, and an *abundant* ſcarcity of knowledge.—There is no mob.—Our common people have not often low ſordid notions, cant phraſeology, nor the groſs callous hardneſs that marks that claſs of minds in whatever

whatever ſituation in life they appear.—Our people, though they loſe their native character whenever they learn languages, or mingle with the canaille of other countries, retain here a great deal, a very great deal, of the Fingalian liberality and courteſy, of that tenderneſs of ſentiment, that elevated generoſity, which caſts a luſtre over the brown deſarts of Morven.—When the fair-haired Fingal ſent round his ſhells among a thouſand heroes, and liſtened to harps of a hundred bards,—why ſhould I explain to you, who know me ſo well, what I mean by mob and anti-mob?—

"Mind, mind alone, bear witneſs earth and heaven,
Within itſelf the exalted ſtores contains
Of beauteous and ſublime."—

I have alſo to lament with you the death of poor W. D., whoſe openneſs of heart, and gaiety of manners, will make the chaſm, occaſioned by his departure, in the ſociety he frequented, be long and ſenſibly felt. Alas! poor Yorick!—I think of him

often, and ſadly, ſince he died.—I liked him better than I cared to own, conſidering how careleſs he was of dignity, and ſometimes of decorum.—But he ſought no reſpect; he only wiſhed to amuſe and to pleaſe, and he generally ſucceeded.—Indeed, whoever does this, ſteals into our favour inſenſibly.—— I am now to notify to you a removal about to take place, in which you will, for my ſake, be intereſted. It is that of my father to town, which, you know, was matter of doubtful ſpeculation, but is now decided.—It will take place in September next.—I feel the increaſed diſtance very painfully;—yet there are many conſiderations which, at more leiſure, I will explain to you, that reconciles me to it. I have lived ſo long entirely for others, that ſelf-denial becomes with me rather a habit than a virtue; and, whatever is propoſed or thought of, 'tis not my own gratification, but the manner in which it affects the various branches of my individual ſelf, that occurs

firſt

firſt to me.—I have likewiſe to inform you that Miſs O. comes poſitively about the beginning of May.——Glaſgow is out of her way, and ſhe will grudge every hour ſhe is abſent from us after ſhe enters Scotland.—She cannot ſtand a Highland winter, and Miſs M. will not be happy if ſhe does not return at the appointed time.—When that comes I ſhall probably accompany her to your place, and ſee my father's family, including ſome of my own, ſettled. I hope you do not think I had the confidence to urge my friend to come to ſuch a place, and ſuch humble accommodation.—She invited herſelf moſt cordially, and I received her proffered viſit with grateful joy; but I have moſt pathetically repreſented how like our *peat reek*, &c. &c. are to the comforts and felicities of Quilca and Cavan, immortalized by Swift.—Yet ſhe is unalterable, and I ſecretly rejoice thereat.—Are you not proud of ſeeing in your own ſex ſuch a fair example of heroic friendſhip?—The anceſtors

of this lady and her friend both left France, for conſcience' ſake, on the repeal of the edict of Nantz; and have, no doubt, many relations there.—Judge how they muſt be affected by the fate of that unhappy country, and what their feelings muſt be in conſequence of the laſt fatal cataſtrophe.—It was but laſt night we heard of it.—News reaches us but ſlowly.—Would you think, after being ſo long engroſſed in domeſtic cares and anxieties, and drinking ſo lately the bitter draught of private and particular ſorrow, that I would weep for a king?—I wonder at it myſelf; and yet I wept abundantly, and was diſturbed and agitated all night.—I am ſtill under a dead weight of ſadneſs: The recent wound of my heart, which is but ſkinned over, ſeeks only a pretence to bleed anew.—Do you feel thus?—Pray get John Hume's Tragedy, and read it for my ſake, and that of the French king.—I remember when I was very young, and felt deep impreſſions from what I read,

I was

I was charmed with the choruſſes in that tragedy.—I am, as uſual, haunted by an appoſite quotation:

" When Jove decrees a nation's doom,
He calls their *worthies* to the tomb.—
Fearleſs they fall, immortal riſe,
And claim the freedom of the ſkies.

He fell not as the warrior falls,
Whoſe breaſt defends his native walls;
To treaſon Agis bow'd his head,
And by his guilty ſubjects bled."—

I have altered one word to make it the better apply to the benign Lewis.—I have obſerved in the hiſtory of all nations, that, when the women become imprudent and licentious, and the ſacred bond of marriage was made light of, that nation's downfal was near.—We are very conſequential beings, believe me.—The purity of female manners is the baſis on which, morally ſpeaking, all the order and virtue of ſociety are founded.—Who cares for his country, but in conſequence of firſt loving the rela-

tions who attach him to it?—And who can care much for parents, brothers, and children, where relation is dubious?—'Tis an abominable ſtate of ſociety, ſetting the great cordial of life, the hope of futurity, out of the queſtion.—May you and I never live to ſee our dear country tainted with this infectious depravity!—I am, in joy and ſorrow, yours unalterably.—

LETTER CXXX.

TO MISS ——.

I THINK I have it now in my power to fulfil the promiſe I made you, of ſending you a tranſlation from the Gaelic.—You judge rightly that I am vain of acquiring ſo much knowledge of that original and moſt emphatic language:—In my next I will ſend

ſend you a literal tranſlation, which I have by me, of part of an ancient fragment, a genuine one remember, and hitherto untouched. The preſent ſubject, however, is modern.— The mourner whom the bard perſonates, is, indeed, ſoft, modeſt, melancholy, and fair; and the deep and real diſtreſs the ſong commemorates is yet recent. ——Mrs. R—, a lady in the neighbourhood of Athol, went to the ſummer ſhealings in the mountains with three remarkably fine children, a boy and two girls:—The boy, who was eldeſt, was diſtinguiſhed by a remarkable fine ear for muſic, and, though but eight years old, played on the violin very ſweetly.—The children caught a peſtilential fever ſome poor neighbour had brought up into the glen, and, being very remote from all aſſiſtance, and the convenience and attendance that ſickneſs requires, the death of all the children was the conſequence, at a very early period of the diſeaſe. The bard, who ſoothed the ſorrows

of

of the parents by this compoſition, appears to me to poſſeſs native genius. Let him ſpeak for himſelf.—

" Ah! ſtill muſt I languiſh, thus pining in anguiſh,
For my joy and my pleaſure,
My heart's deareſt treaſure,
The fair ſun-beams that brighten'd my ſoul!
The loud ſtorm blew boldly,
The bleak blaſt came coldly,
My ſweet buds all blighted,
Forlorn, and benighted,
Ah! nothing can eaſe or conſole!—

Where was beauty freſh blowing,
Where was ſtature faſt growing,
Where was truth and affection,
Where was thought and reflection,
That ſo early appear'd in full bloom?
At midnight when muſing,
All comfort refuſing,
I hear thro' my groaning,
Your voices low moaning,
O ſpeak to me once from the tomb!

The ſighs of my mourning,
Ariſe with the morning,
And when ev'nings ſoft ſhow'rs
Weep freſh o'er the flow'rs,

My

My tears fall as ſilent unſeen.—
Who hears me lamenting,
But ſadly conſenting,
Muſt pity my grieving,
Since heav'n, thus bereaving,
Has wither'd my fair plants ſo green!—

The viol ſo ſprightly,
Who touches ſo lightly?
O, peace to its ſounding,
My troubl'd heart wounding,
For my ſon, ſhall awake it no more!—
Nor my daughters gay ſmiling,
My cares once beguiling,
From their cold bed returning,
Shall baniſh my mourning,
Or hear me their abſence deplore!—

O children belov'd,
Where are you remov'd?—
Have you left us ſo early,
Who cheriſh'd you dearly,
For the dark ſilent chambers of death!
The fair ſun returning,
Shall light the new morning,
Freſh graſs on the mountains,
Freſh flow'rs by the fountains,
Shall wake with the ſpring's gentle breath.

But

But no morning new breaking,
My children ſhall waken,
'Tis hopeleſs to number
The days of their ſlumber,
The long ſleep that awakens no more!—
Shall the cold earth's dark boſom,
Still hide each fair bloſſom!—
Have angels not borne them
Where bright rays adorn them,
Where on wings of new rapture they ſoar?—

On my fancy thus beaming,
My eyes ever ſtreaming,
My breaſt ever heaving,
Their image relieving,
Shall ſoothe into penſive repoſe:
In beauty tranſcendent,
In brightneſs reſplendent,
I ſhall meet them when life has no cloſe!"

I have preſerved, as far as poſſible, the ſimplicity of the original; but its tenderneſs, the ſolemn ſadneſs that runs through it, its pathetic beauties, I am ſenſible I have not reached.—I have left out many verſes.—Poetry in the ancient ſtyle knows nothing of

of concentrating thoughts.—It was the object of undivided and unwearied attention to minds ſuſceptible of all its beauties, unchilled by intereſt, unhardened by vanity.—Children of nature did not turn wearied and ſatiated from the expreſſion of genuine feeling to liſten to every rattle by which novelty allures frivolous minds.—Now you have a modern poem, which, if I have not ſpoiled it in the tranſlation, will give you ſome idea of the language of nature and true ſorrow.—The ſtanzas are in a form unuſual and uncouth; but I could not think of deviating from the original meaſure, which is adapted to a wild plaintive tune, quite in uniſon with the ſadneſs of the ſubject.—If you ſet a due value on my effort to oblige you, I ſhall ſend you the "tale of other times" very ſoon; and am, with all due reſpect for your laudable curioſity, yours, &c.

LETTER CXXXI.

TO MISS D—.

JANUARY 1, 1802.

DEAR MADAM,

So young, and ſuch a novice in ſorrow, you have not yet learnt the weakneſs, the extreme languor, into which the mind ſinks when the firſt violent burſts are over.—Incapable of raiſing itſelf to the true ſource of conſolation, and ready to lean on every reed,—in this ſtate ſympathy is moſt availing, and in this hopeleſs and diſpirited ſtate your letter found me. - - - - Why then apologize for what excites my warmeſt gratitude? Your dear worthy mother and you I have long known and eſteemed, through the medium of your humble friend. —This proof of your goodneſs to ſo great a ſtranger,

a ſtranger, convinces me that you are all I have been taught to imagine you.—You wiſh to know how I bear the ſudden ſhock of this calamity.—I bore it wonderfully, conſidering how very much I had to loſe.—Still, at times, the Divine Goodneſs ſupports me in a manner I ſcarcely dared to hope.—Happily for me, anxiety for a numerous orphan family, and the wounding ſmiles of an infant, too dear to be neglected, and too young to know what he has loſt, divide my ſorrows, and do not ſuffer my mind to be wholly engroſſed by this dreadful privation,—this chaſm that I ſhudder to look into.—A daughter of all daughters the moſt dutiful and affectionate, in whom her father ſtill lives, ſo truly does ſhe inherit his virtues, and all the amiable peculiarities of his character, this daughter, is waſting away with ſecret ſorrow, while, "in ſmiles, ſhe hides her grief to ſoften mine." - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - I was too much a veteran in affliction, and too ſenſible

ſible of the arduous taſk devolved upon me, to ſit down in unavailing ſorrow, overwhelmed by an event which ought to call forth double exertion.—None, indeed, was ever at greater pains to conſole another, than I was to muſter up every motive for action, every argument for patient ſuffering.—No one could ſay to me the loſs is common; few, very few, indeed had ſo much happineſs to loſe.—To depict a character ſo very uncommon, ſo little obvious to common obſervers, who loved and revered without comprehending him, would be difficult for a ſteadier hand than mine.—With a kind of mild diſdain, and philoſophic tranquillity, he kept aloof from a world, for which the delicacy of his feelings, the purity of his integrity, and the intuitive diſcernment with which he ſaw into character, in a manner diſqualified him, that is, from enjoying it; for who can enjoy the world without deceiving or being deceived?—But recollections crowd on me, and I wander.

wander.—I ſay to be all the world to this ſuperior mind, to conſtitute his happineſs for twenty years, now vaniſhed like a viſion, to have lived with unabated affection together even thus long, when a conſtitution, delicate as his mind, made it unlikely that even thus long we ſhould ſupport each other through the paths of life! - - - - - - - - - - - - What are difficulties when ſhared with one whoſe delighted approbation gives one ſpirits to ſurmount them?—Then to hear from every mouth his modeſt unobtruſive merit receive its due tribute of applauſe,—to ſee him ſtill in his dear children, now doubly dear, and to know that ſuch a mind cannot periſh, cannot ſuffer—nay, through the infinite merits of that Redeemer, in whom he truſted, enjoys what we cannot conceive.——Dear Miſs D—r, believe me, I would not give my tremulous hopes, and pleaſing ſad retroſpections, for any other perſon's happineſs!—Forgive this; it is like the overflowing of the heart

charmed me in the perusal, though I were not, myself, the obliged and grateful object of that friendship; but, before I answer it, I must tell you I have just parted with two friends whom I may never meet again, and who have been both very useful in supporting my spirits during this period of calamity. The preparations for their departure have not only engrossed but overpowered me.—One is the book of books, the revisal of which had almost turned the brain of brains before it was completed.—The other is the daughter of daughters, who is now on her way to England, and has left me under much depression.—But resolved not to yield to it, many a hard battle have I fought with despondency, and often, as now, have I been playful, for fear of being doleful. If I had not a firm reliance on Providence inwardly, and an active mind, that impels and enlivens my struggles outwardly, how could I still exist, after the hard pulls my heart-strings have had? The

motives, &c. of this journey I ſhall explain hereafter, for I never could narrate when my head ached.—We ſpent "one day of parting love," as Burns ſays, at Dalwhinny, from which her young couſins, Iſabella, and I returned to-day.—I took refuge in my haunt in the deep dell where the Bronnach daſhes impetuouſly over its rocky channel; there I ſcrawled a few lines with a pencil, which I will retrace and incloſe for your peruſal.—But the meaning of this effuſion connects ſo cloſely with the ſcenery, that, without a commentary by that *cool critic* Barr, you will not half taſte it. Let her paint the landſcape which ſhe has ſo often ſeen (and felt); let her tell you how the Bronnach is born in the receſſes of the Cony bay, very near Charlotte's beautiful fountain. From this kindred ſtream it diverges, and turns its courſe towards our cottage, before it deſcends from the eminence under which we are ſheltered. Never, ſure, in quarter of a mile's courſe, did a

mountain-brook aſſume ſuch various aſpects, and ſpeak ſuch different languages. —Turbulent and hoarſe it firſt deſcends over rocks and great ſtones, through the deep chaſm which its wintry tumults have formed in the ſteep deſcent; when it reaches the houſe, cloſe to which it paſſes, the channel is ſtony but not abrupt; its murmurs are ſtill loud, but regular and not unpleaſing. A little further on it runs over ſmooth pebbles, its borders are verdant, and its ſound equal, and almoſt muſical. Preſently after it enters a meadow, rich and flowery beyond all compare, fertilized by the overflowing of Spey, beautiful with luxuriant herbage, and diverſified by the windings of this wandering ſtream, which becomes here a perfect meander, circling round ſo often, that it ſeems inclined to reviſit its ſource. Its brink affords ſhelter, amidſt the tufted flowers, to an incredible number of larks, and its channel in this rich mould is ſo deep, that the ſound is

ſofter

ſofter and ſweeter than any other ſtream. When I walked alone, to indulge ſorrow, I always went up the ſtream. How many tranquil evenings have I traced its wanderings through the meadows with thoſe who never more will ſhare my peaceful enjoyjoyments.—But now to the purpoſe.——

" LINES addreſſed to the BRONNACH, A ſmall Stream that deſcends from the Mountain in a remote Part of the Highlands.

Rude ſtream, that com'ſt daſhing the wild rocks among,
And drown'ſt in thy tumults the paſtoral ſong,
How oft thy hoarſe clamours have ſoften'd my care,
When pining with anguiſh, or ſunk in deſpair!—

When nature lay huſh'd in oblivious repoſe,
When nothing was waking but I and my woes,
When the ſtars all beheld me, with bright eyes of fire,
And bade me reſign, and their Author admire;

Then, where by my cottage thy turbulent courſe,
Like ſorrow ſubſiding, diminiſh'd its force,
When the heart overburden'd could ſeek for relief,
Thy murmurs how placid, how ſoothing to grief!—

When morn in freſh beauty enlighten'd the ſkies,
When the ſun was preparing in ſplendour to riſe,
Among the ſmooth pebbles in melody clear,
Smooth gliding, thy waters more lucid appear.—

But when in the meadows, at ev'ning's ſoft hours,
On thy borders I wander, 'midſt verdure and flow'rs,
Where, hid in thy channel, in whiſpers ſo ſweet,
Thou art heard in a cadence for ſympathy meet;

My muſings, tho' penſive, are free from deſpair,
Where, roving, I feel the ſoft balm of the air,
While from thy low banks, to aſcend to the ſky,
My ſoul ſeems to follow the larks where they fly.

When the ſun from the weſt, with a ſoft parting ray,
Irradiates thy ſtream, where it mingles with Spey,
While to ſeek the wide ocean thy pure waters roll,
How ſad, yet how tranquil, the calm of my ſoul!—

The ſtream that with thee in the mountains aroſe,
In whoſe dark receſſes your ſources diſcloſe,
Whoſe parting, thy murmurs lament all the way,
Tho' forc'd from beſide thee ſo early to ſtray,

Now again ſhall rejoin thee, and flow in one tide,
Nor part till to ocean together you glide,
How bleſt who arrive at that ſea without ſhore,
Where currents rejoin, to be ſunder'd no more!"

LETTER CXXXIII.

TO MISS D—;

LAGGAN, APRIL 24, 1802.

DEAR MADAM,

I WROTE a haſty ſcrawl to accompany the poetical fugitives you wiſhed for, which I ſent to *Barr* to be forwarded; but *Barr*, "whoſe meaner ſtars have ſhut her up in wiſhes," has every inclination, but no power to tranſmit the important packet. So I muſt brandiſh the quill once more, though ſcarce able to lift it; for I have been for ten days paſt ſick, ſpiritleſs, forlorn, and dejected.—I am no whiner, and love my friends too well to inflict my ſufferings upon them, when I ſuffer moderately.—Indeed, when I do not poſitively ſuffer, I do poſitively enjoy; for which reaſon it is more

peculiarly my duty to ſuffer patiently, and enjoy gratefully.—Now you will reaſonably expect a definition of what I call enjoyment. —It is when the ſenſibilities of my heart are excited, and find objects worthy of them. —It is when I can meditate in peace, and return to my firſt love, the fair face of nature, with ſerene complacency; at times heightened into an enthuſiaſm equally tender and ſolemn. It is when I can indulge recollections that exalt my mind while they ſoften it. It is when my ſorrows are aſleep, lulled by the cheering ſmiles of playful infancy, or the eaſy artleſs converſation of the young, the innocent, and the affectionate.— I ſay nothing of the humanizing muſe, her ladyſhip having, at times, a great propenſity to point the ſtings of pain, and being, at beſt, but a capricious comforter.—Now you muſt needs be tired of egotiſm; but who ſuch egotiſts as the ſick and ſorrowful, and what ſo improving to the young, the gay, and proſperous, as to know how ſuf-

fering

fering may be endured, to know the ingredients of that wholeſome, though unpalateable cup, of which we muſt all drink by turns?—I owe you, after your patient endurance of this homily, ſome lighter theme.—I muſt tell you the origin of the ſong Mary improperly called a tranſlation.—You muſt know, that, in the progreſs of Highland ſociety, there was a kind of intermediate ſtate, to which a good deal of pleaſing fanciful poetry owes its origin.—But then it is ſo local, ſo peculiar, ſo untranſlateable, 'tis abſolute ſal volatile.—The heroic age, as you well know, was entirely divided betwixt war and the chace.—Love, in ſuch an age, appears not in a voluptuous or *ſeducing* form.——Man, always born to ſuffer and to mourn, then ſuffered more ſeverely, and mourned more deeply.—Love was a ſolemn ſerious paſſion, interwoven with the ruling one of heroic atchievement.—A man loved his miſtreſs much the better that he had obtained her by ſome warlike exploit, and

mourned her loſs the more, as it was generally attended with that of his far greater idol, honour. He often won her by war, and ſupported her by hunting.—This inferior war gave ſcope to thoſe purſuits that elevated their minds into that ſublime melancholy with which their love, their poetry, and their muſic were ſo ſtrongly tinctured.—When their extravagant and reſtleſs knight-errantry had almoſt occaſioned the extinction of the Fingalian race of heroes, a new tribe appeared, more induſtrious and leſs enterprizing.—In ſhort, the paſtoral age commenced, and the firſt tenders of cattle were regarded by heroic bards, and love-lorn maids, (who were of courſe muſical and poetical,) as a degenerate race, who had not ſpirit or ability to encounter the hazards and fatigues of a life of hunting. Theſe are the ſons of little men, ſo contemptuouſly ſpoken of, and indeed conſidered as the idle and cowardly part of the community.—However, the tide of property

perty and conſequence changing, that prejudice changed with it;—the muſe deſerted to the paſtoral vale, and maidens began to boaſt the peaceful plenty of their lover's folds, and deſcribe their herds and flocks with rapture.—Others, again, praiſed the valour of their hunters, the wild variety of their purſuits, and the ſylvan ſcenery they traced in ſearch of their game.—The authoreſs of the ſweet wild ſtrain Crochallin, provoked to emulation, extols her Colin's herds and flocks, and aſcribes ſingular properties to them.—They require no fold, no herd, no reſtraint; ſhe dwells with delight on their beauty and ſwiftneſs;—

" O where are thy flocks, that ſo lightly rebound,
And fly o'er the heath without touching the ground?
So beauteous, ſo varied, ſo dappl'd their hue,
So agile, ſo graceful, ſo charming to view.
In all the wide foreſt, ſure nought can appear,
Like the flocks of my Colin, my hunter, my dear."—

All ends in the diſcovery that her lover was a hunter, and the animals, whoſe beauty

and vivacity ſhe had been admiring, were deer, roes, and fawns.—This I ſome time ago transfuſed (for tranſlate I could not) into Engliſh for Mr. T.—I have been tedious, and feel myſelf the better for being ſo, but am tired.—To-morrow night I will ſpur myſelf up to be tedious again, and anſwer all your queries with regard to Burns.—Good night.—Sleep be upon thine eyes, peace in thy breaſt!——

LETTER CXXXIV.

TO MISS D—R.

LAGGAN, APRIL 25, 1802.

NOW I have to ſatisfy you as to my favourite poem of Burns; doubtleſs the Daiſy is the moſt finiſhed, and excels in ſimple elegance,—"The De'il himſel" in humour, exquiſite

exquiſite peculiar humour.—I confeſs, if decorous people could be reconciled to blackguardiſm, John Hornbook is the very emperor of blackguards.—Only think of that deſpotic power over the fancy which can unite, what the creative Shakeſpeare himſelf never united, the terrible and the ludicrous.——Yet, where death is perſonified meeting the bard, I am ſure you would laugh if you were not afraid.—The ſame power re-appears in "Tam of Shanter," which I allow to poſſeſs ſuperior excellence, though not the very ſort of excellence moſt to my taſte.—But if you talk of my very own taſte, I find myſelf quite at home in "The Epiſtle to Davy," and "The Saturday's Even." The latter, indeed, draws aid from the true ſource of the ſublime and beautiful in compoſition, the ſacred Scriptures.—The epiſtles have a ſtrength of thought, with a playful eaſe of expreſſion, a mixture of ſound ſenſe and ſportive gaiety, which is really delightful.—The

" Auld Farmer to his Mare Maggy" is a very great favourite.—" The Lament" has more nerve in it than all the love laments I ever ſaw put together.—Then the ſongs —what a wilderneſs of ſweets is there, and how puzzling is choice among ſuch contending beauties! I, who delight in Scotch landſcape and ſimple pathos, overlook ſongs richer in poetry, to ſhelter under the bard's plaid:

" O wert thou in the cauld blaſt,
On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
My plaidy to the angry aiſt,
I'd ſhelter thee, I'd ſhelter thee."—

Or

" Wander wi Jean in yon glen of green bracken,
Where the burnie ſteals under the lang yellow broom."

If I could indeed reſiſt the ſoft attraction of

" O wha is ſhe that loe's me,
And has my heart in keeping?
O ſweet is ſhe that loe's me,
Like dews in ſummer weeping,
In tears the roſe-buds ſteeping," &c. &c.

If

Hever you know, as well as I do, what it is to have your heart wrung with agony,

" On the paſt too fondly pondering,
O'es the hopeleſs future wandering,"

you will feel the force of Iſabella's complaint:

" Raving winds around her blowing," &c. &c.

Hear the true language of deſpair:

" Life, thou ſoul of every bleſſing,
Load to mis'ry moſt diſtreſſing,
O how gladly I'd reſign thee,
And to dark oblivion join thee!"—

In extreme bitterneſs of ſoul we all ſhould ſay this, if we knew how.—One more elyſian flower from this rich wreath, and I have done.

" And wear thou this," ſhe ſolemn ſaid,
And plac'd the holly on my head.—
Its poliſh'd leaves, and berries red,
Did ruſtling play,
And, like a paſſing thought, ſhe fled
In light away.—

Let the doors of the temple of fancy be for

for ever barred on thoſe who can read this without turning, involuntarily, to gaze on vacancy, and ſtartling at the ruſtling leaves, when Coila flies " in light away."—I muſt doſer George's hiſtory and pedigree; he is a good docile rational creature,—but no deſert after ſuch a feaſt as Burns.—This minute the poſt goes off, and this inſtant I have your packet.—I can only, at preſent, give you joy of your mother's recovery, to give you joy of each other, with all the feeling of a widowed mother, very dependent on the attention of daughters.—Theſe return your kind wiſhes with intereſt, as does their mother.—Adieu, affectionately.——You talk of ſixpence: now I will give a groat for your criticiſm on the old bard, and a penny a-piece for your ſtrictures on the *lyrics*, and that exhauſts the ſixpence; ſo write very ſoon for the public emolument and my gratification.

LETTER CXXXV.

TO MISS D.

MAY 4, 1802.

I NOW haſten to your queries.—I cannot tell you how much I admire and deſpiſe Peter.—He is every way original, and moſt original in this reſpect: I know not that ever any other object at once excited my contempt and admiration. His humour is moſt peculiar, moſt unaffected, moſt irreſiſtible. Yet, for what end Providence truſted a weapon ſo dangerous into the hands of one who avows his diſregard to every thing ſacred and venerable, is very difficult for us to conjecture.—I am the more fully convinced of the bad tendency of his writings from the amuſement I derive from them, fore-armed, as I am, by a diſguſt

diſguſt at his want of principle and decency.—Bozzy and Piozzi, however, is above praiſe and beyond cenſure:—there the ſatire is ſo juſt, ſo pointed, ſo characteriſtic, that one can laugh without ſelf-reproach.—The Louſiad, however, I regard with a mixture of contempt and diſguſt.—Burleſque ſpun out ſo long is loathſome; 'tis a farce of five acts.——Again to make royal weakneſſes, ſhould they even exiſt, a ſubject for ridicule, I think immoral as well as impolitic.—This ſcandalous licence would be intolerable, though we were not, as now, ruled by a virtuous and exemplary prince.—It is neceſſary for the good of ſociety that we venerate our rulers, unleſs they oppreſs us by tyranny, or ſhew a corrupting example.—Whoever applies a magnifying glaſs to every ſpeck of human infirmity, ſhakes the main pillars that ſupport government, the love and reſpect people have for their rulers; and this is laughing at too great an expence. - - - - I greatly admire

the

the ſongs of Burns you mention; Jeſſy is exquiſite; but my ſelection was from ſongs not ſo generally popular, but which have, to my taſte, tranſcendant merit.—From ſongs to ſinging the tranſition is eaſy, which leads to another of your queries. All my young people love muſic, but only thoſe inherit their father's fine taſte and paſſable voice, who are ſo happy as to reſemble him otherwiſe.—Theſe are - - - and - - -. —D— too has a very fine voice and ear.—Muſical talents we could not afford to cultivate.—Paying the ſhoemaker's account for ſuch a hoſt was a ſerious affair.—M— has, in moſt things, a very good taſte.—You may depend more on it than mine, ever blinded, as I am, by partiality. She thinks you have made the moſt of your ſubject, but it is not a happy one, nothing very lively or very tender naturally ariſing from it, giving no room either for pathos or gaiety.——Your lines on your brother's return, which ſhe met with in one of Barr's written

written books," delighted her,—ſo elegant, eaſy, and tender.—You would be vain if you knew what ſo calm a critic thought of them.—You dazzle and overpower one with Miſs F.'s character.—I think I too would indulge her favourite propenſity, if I had ſcope for it.—Improving the face of nature I had almoſt called a divine amuſement.—She, who has made the deſart to bloſſom as the roſe, is the benefactreſs of the unborn as well as her cotemporaries.——I was ready to cry on reading your deſcription of her: "Lady, you are the cruelleſt ſhe alive, if you will lead thoſe graces to the grave, and leave the world no copy."—Perhaps the lady might anſwer from the ſame author, "I will not be overmaſtered by a valiant piece of clay," &c.—I have left no room for acknowledging your generous and highly-ſucceſsful exertions on my account, but I am run away with by Miſs F—r.—I do feel a little exalted at knowing there are ſuch women in the world.

world.—Remember me, in all kindneſs, to your unequalled mother; 'tis Barr that makes me know her.—

I am, &c. &c.

LETTER CXXXVI.

TO MISS D—R.

LAGGAN, OCTOBER 5, 1802.

MY DEAR HELEN,

YOUR return from Aberdeenſhire was matter of conſolation to me on various accounts.—My two great props, the book of books and M., being taken away at once, I fell into ſuch a relapſe of deſpondency.—The image which muſt ever live in my heart, and dwell in my meditations, did ſo engroſs me, to the excluſion or diminution of every other concern.—I never ſleep much; but, during this "double gloom

gloom of nature and of ſoul," I know only the painful tranſition from deep dejection to ſevere anxiety; and, when exhauſted by the labour of the mind, I ſunk into a ſtate that more reſembled a heavy torpor than refreſhing ſlumber. I waked with a ſudden ſtart, before the dawn, to horror inexpreſſible.—Yet I never took more pains to ſoothe a ſick infant than I did to reaſon down the throbbings of unconquerable anguiſh.—All the ſingular inſtances of the Divine goodneſs, which have ſhone upon me ſince I was left alone in the world, I have made to paſs in review before me, and reproached myſelf for ſinking while thus ſupported.—Were you ever ſtruck with an affecting inſtance of the true ſublime in the Old Teſtament? it is where Moſes, as it ſhould ſeem, encouraged by being admitted into ſo near communion with the Deity, entreats that he would ſhine forth upon him in full reſplendence,

"Lord, ſhew me thy glory."

I will

I will make all my goodneſs to paſs before thee.—What an anſwer!—how condeſcending its beneficence, how rich its meaning!—how cold muſt be the heart that does not make the ſuitable comment on this emphatical definition of true glory!—Confeſs now that I do not uſe either to lament or preach to you.—The heart knoweth its own ſorrows, and a ſtranger intermeddleth not therewith.—I do not mean to cloud the gayeſt thoughts of gayeſt age, where there is ſo much reaſon to believe it an innocent and warrantable gaiety; and I know too much of the ſource whence you draw your inſtruction to believe it in my power to make any valuable addition to it.—But, ſometimes, the overcharged heart will ſeek in ſympathy an alleviation, where there is no hope of cure.—Your late indiſpoſition and depreſſion will make all this intelligible to you: I can aſſure you my concern and apprehenſion about A. L. was one of my terrors; and, through the gloomy medium

in which I beheld all objects of fear, you yourself, you, were another of my disturbers. — Judge, then, whether I was glad when I got your letter, and whether I was grateful when I saw with what alacrity you went in search of A. L.; and how determined you were to think the best of her.— I don't know whether I remarked to you before, that I never knew a creature who enjoys, in a higher degree, that

"Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind,"

which Pope gives to his vestals.—She goes on rejoicing in her course all day, and every day; and this without animal spirits,—mere cheerfulness of heart.—I am happy to hear your Aberdeenshire *jauntey*, as Burns calls it, has been so serviceable to you. You have been quite in high life, where I should not like to have been with you; for early did I say,

"Vain pomp and glory of this world, I hate you."

But perhaps you will call this sour grapes;

—not

—not quite neither.—I love elegance in ſentiment, in language, in manners, though I don't care for the externals and inſignia of it, nor can bear it at all when diſjoined from ſimplicity.—Artifice, ſpleen, vanity, and falſe refinement are the demons by which the upper regions of life are haunted.—Muſt I confeſs that groſſneſs, vulgarity, and indelicacy puddle about like pigs and ducks in the lower world.—We made a little world to ourſelves, where eaſe, ſimplicity, and a kind of negative elegance, gave an undefinable charm to our cottage.—This made people of genuine feeling and uncultured taſte like it without being able to tell why.—Sweet cottage! muſt I leave it?—I will tell you, ſome time or other, how our poppies and convolvuluſſes nod into the low windows, and how richly the woodbine clothes the porch, where we have ſo often ſat together, contemplating a mild ſhowery evening, that would let us go no further.—But what does this avail?—I

don't

don't mean all this to detract from the merits of Miſs F.'s elegance, which, I doubt not, is regulated by her taſte, as well as dignified by her virtues. I am glad you ſaid nothing to theſe inexorable tigers and tigreſſes at M—y—k;—what barbarians to be blind to the beauties of the book they never ſaw, and deaf to the eloquence of the book-maker they never heard! Is Lord Lyttleton ſon or grandſon to the virtuous and poetical nobleman of that title?—The verſes he left at Caſtle F—r are ſweetly turned.—I give you joy of having "the dark rider of the wave" for an inmate; he will make a frigate of the houſe, in which the BRAMIN will be midſhipman, you firſt lieutenant, and your mother maſter and commander.—He will be an animating acquiſition.—I think, brothers are the only poſſeſſions I ever envied any one.—For more than twenty years the ſenſe of this deſideratum was effaced; but now I feel it more than ever.—How rich are you in

theſe

theſe enviable relations; a mother that is ſiſter and friend, as well as guide and monitreſs, and peace and leiſure, and muſic and literature, and taſte and health, and ſenſe to ſet the juſt value on all theſe bleſſings; and ſympathy to keep your feelings from hardening in proſperity.—Look round now, and ſee if there is any ſo happy.—I leave you to the grateful contemplation of all theſe bleſſings. Adieu Felicia! - - - - I am ſorry I mentioned ——'s eulogium; a conſciouſneſs of that kind is deſtructive of eaſe of intimacy, and 'tis agreeable to be on an eaſy footing with a rational man who expects nothing.——

LETTER CXXXVII.

TO MISS D—R BOATH.

LAGGAN, OCT. 20, 1802.

ONCE more my dear Helen (and then fatewel for a while) give me your pity and your prayers.—Your dear mother, whom I love and revere unſeen, will give me her pity, and her prayers.—I will anticipate no evils; but aſk the divine aid to frame my mind to ſomething between hope and reſignation, while I leave this groupe of orphans, loving and beloved as they are, to attend the ſick bed of one whom abſence and calamity have made beſt and deareſt in my eyes for the preſent.—I cannot now narrate; but her recovery from a ſlow nervous fever is ſo dubious and unlikely, that Mrs. P—, obliged to leave home by an urgent call

call of ſimilar diſtreſs, wiſhes, before ſhe ſets out, to have one of M's relations from Scotland, to attend her.—I am the fitteſt to undertake this taſk.—My anxiety would be doubled if either of her ſiſters went alone in diligences at this ſeaſon. —— is too timid and too delicate. —— has an arduous charge of various concerns, and feels too ſtrongly to act properly among ſtrangers in ſuch a trying emergency.—I had your letter laſt night; it would give me pleaſure if any thing could; but my chief comfort juſt now is to recollect promiſes of divine conſolation and ſupport from Him who will not afflict above meaſure.—

" With the Patriarch's truſt,"
Thy call I follow to a land unknown."

This paſſage of Young runs in my head, like the prevalent idea in a delirium.—I ſhall bewilder you as well as myſelf, by leading you into the howling wilderneſs through which my mind wanders. Only this, let not poor A. O. know of the im-

pending cloud, or my departure. - - - - - - - - I am glad you and dear Mr. M—y like her ſo well.—Hers is the milder merit of the heart; but ſuch a ſpotleſs heart, and a temper ſo unclouded!—In the depth of deſpondency I ſometimes lay hold of a ludicrous idea to play with; ſuch is that of your houſe being turned to a frigate. Don't miſtake me. I know your brother is no *mer-man*. — Nautical ſkill, as a man of ſcience, and the reſolute manlineſs of his profeſſion, are, in his caſe, I am told, blended with eaſy manners, and an improved mind.— No longer whimſical or ſportive, behold me a ſuppliant for a life dearer than my own, and ſhivering with fearful expectation.— May every bleſſing attend you!

LETTER CXXXVIII.

TO MISS D—R.

GLASGOW, NOV. 7, 1802.

MY DEAR KIND HELEN,

WORN, as I am, by the preſſure of many ſorrows, divided, as I am, between neceſſary occupation, and many viſits of ſympathy which I receive, can I go to England; and remain for a time in dread ſuſpence ſo far from you, without bidding you farewel, without expreſſing my gratitude for all your kindneſs to O., ſo amply detailed, and ſo warmly commented on, by that paragon of grateful damſels?—I hope this will find you in ſome degree recovered from the indiſpoſition ſhe lamented ſo much. Perhaps the time may arrive, after all theſe clouds are overblown, when I may,

from the occurrences of my journey, and short ſtay in Edinburgh, furniſh out an amuſing detail; but now "chaos is come again,"—at leaſt in my brain.——Since writing the above, I have witneſſed a very impreſſive ſcene; it was the departure of a young lady who reſided in my father's houſe for ſome time paſt.—Her father had been chaplain to a ſettlement abroad, and left her in eaſier circumſtances than generally happens to the children of Levi. She only meant to ſtay a few weeks at my father's on her way to the north, where her friends live.—There ſhe was arreſted by ſickneſs, her lungs being in a decayed ſtate before, and there ſhe has been ſince June laſt, lingering a life that might well be called a protracted death, C—, in the mean time, doing all in the power of compaſſionate attention to alleviate her ſufferings.—At Edinburgh I heard that Mary was ſo much better that I needed not proceed.—I gave up my intention, yet thought, as I was ſo

 near,

near, I would ſee my parents, and arrange my Stirlingſhire eſtabliſhment.—I wrote M., that if ſhe felt a wiſh for my coming, here I was, and there I would go.—Now, while I ſat in ſecurity, and moreover heard from Mrs. P. that ſhe was walking out, I began to breathe a little, when another letter informed me that her frequent relapſes, and the danger of her lungs, made it neceſſary for her to remove to the hot wells, unleſs ſhe ſoon grew better.—The agony it coſt me to relinquiſh my intention of returning to the dear family I have left, is unſpeakable; but it muſt be.—I ſhould have gone yeſterday, but could not forſake this poor dying girl.—Laſt night ſhe expired, and O how forlorn and friendleſs!—No creature to beſtow a tear on her departure, but ourſelves.—Why do I enlarge thus, or who can underſtand the ſtate of my mind? —Yet let me, in this wounding exigency, do juſtice to the unwearied kindneſs, the tender ſympathy I receive. Who ever

needed, who ever met with ſo much?—All this is incoherence, but we muſt lay our account to ſuffer as well as enjoy with our friends. 'Tis a proud pre-eminence, and worth buying at a high price, to be a friend.——I entreat your worthy mother's prayers; I know how you will mourn over the dear children I leave behind.—Adieu, my dear Helen; I will write to you when I am more at eaſe. Peace be with you!—

LETTER CXXXIX.

TO MISS D—R.

BRISTOL HOTWELLS, JAN. 20, 1803.

MY DEAR HELEN,

I AM ſure diſtance, and ſorrow, and care have not extinguiſhed that ardour of benevolence which was formerly rather excited and

and heightened by the cauſes that freeze the friendſhips of the world.—I feel myſelf already in danger of moralizing and ſpeculating.—If once I wander into digreſſion, farewel to order, connexion, and information;—and to you, of all others, I am moſt apt to digreſs. Now for a ſuccinct dry narrative.—Very dry indeed it will prove; for, from the haraſſed ſtate of my mind, looking back only to grief, and forward to terror, I heard things without liſtening to them, and ſaw them without looking at them.—Firſt, now, behold me in the ſtreets of Glaſgow, preparing to enter the mail-coach, which was occupied by two gentlemen, one well dreſſed, well bred, and rather youthful-looking, whoſe countenance beſpoke good humour and intelligence; and much veracity of countenance he had, as ſhall appear in the ſequel.—The other,—how ſhall I deſcribe him?—for he was all chagrin at the time, and looking his very worſt; yet, through his neglected heavy

figure, and harſh ſun-burnt countenance, ſome gleams of the gentleman broke dimly forth; yet I really ſhrunk from him, and thought of Sterne's Smelfungus. He was ſick and he was ſplenetic; and he did nothing but growl and murmur, and tell his grievances, all the way to Hamilton.—But, though he was ſurly, he was not vulgar; his language was that of a manly and enlightened mind, through which gleams of feeling and gentleneſs broke forth unconſciouſly.—In ſhort, by the time we reached Moffat, I thought him like the ghoſt of Matthew Bramble.—M—, our fellow-traveller, ſoftened him and amuſed me; he was intelligent, gay, facetious, and accomdating.—He had been a few days before at Dr. M.'s, whom he ſeemed to know intimately. He is a native of Inverneſs-ſhire, and had already been in both the Weſt and Eaſt Indies.—Laggan was familiar to him, but I could not make him out. At Moffat he went off, proceeding to London, but I took

took the weſt road, in company with my new friend, who, by this time, ſaw my diſtreſſing anxiety, and took conſiderable intereſt in me.—I ſaved a hundred miles by this courſe. I had a letter to a lady in Carliſle, where I ſhould have ſtaid a night. —Unable, in the ferment of my mind, to ſleep, and unwilling to loſe my fellow-traveller, whom I begun to look up to with a kind of reſpect, I proceeded without ſleeping; for, in a carriage, I never can.—That day we could neither get a mail-coach, nor a partner in a poſt chaiſe, ſo we took places in a right miſcellaneous voiture, emphatically called the long coach, and very long indeed we thought the time we were in it. I never felt ſuch degradation, or witneſſed ſuch depravity and groſſneſs.—My new friend was indignant, and diſguſted beyond meaſure, and proteſted againſt any ſuch aſſociation for the future; ſo, after vainly ſearching the good town of Lancaſter for an aſſociate, we took a poſt chaiſe to Liver-

pool, being now perfectly known to each other through mutual acquaintances.—His name is ——; he is sovereign, I presume, of some little *grenadilloe* in the West Indies, and is married to a lady whose connexions I know, and with whom he appears to be very happy.—He delighted in speaking of his children, to which, you may believe, Desdemona did seriously incline, for I like those domestic traits, and he seems a fond parent indeed.—We had many wise discussions on education, and much nursery discourse, &c. Besides, I, who love to know a little of every thing, know more now of West India matters than ever I thought to have done.—This "fair discourse" brought us to Liverpool.—There I found no rest for the sole of my foot, for M. "had murdered sleep."—You wonder I give you no account of the places I went through; I really cannot, we passed so rapidly.—Only this, I did not like the face of either Cumberland or Lancashire.—

They

They were flat, bleak, unvaried; having neither the romantic variety of dear Scotland, nor the mild features and rich culture which I expected, and afterwards met with, in England. Indeed the ſeaſon, and my mind, were ſo gloomy, that I ſhould ſcarce have done juſtice to Elyſian proſpects, and, I dare ſay, I did great injuſtice to Liverpool, which, I am ſure, is a fine town, could I but think ſo; but my eyes, half cloſed, could not admit its ſymmetry, or contemplate its regularity.—I was diſappointed in their farm-houſes too; for it is in that ſcene of life, and not among fine people, or wealthy citizens, that I look for diſcriminating lines of character, to be traced in their habits and form of life; but O, theſe are groſs and unrural!—brick farm-houſes, built on the very edge of the road, as if to ſtare at the excluded traveller;—offices at the very end without a rural court, or any form denoting taſte or ſocial order.—They have, indeed, little gardens before, but

but they are ſuch confined, formal, ſuburbian-like things, that they baniſh the idea of ruſtic ſimplicity, nay, even of rural eaſe.—Every place too is covered with tiles, which are my antipathy.—My own dear cottage, with its merry thatch, its woodbine porch, its green court ſurrounded by ſhrubs, and its outer court of offices, the image of comfort and regularity, came ſadly ſweet to my recollection, like joys departed never to return.—I heard, in idea, the roar of my mountain-ſtreams, and the blaſts from the hills of my fathers, while England faded from my view.—I meant to tell you what I ſaw, and I feel myſelf vainly trying to deſcribe what I felt.—Well, but I meant to ſay the formal wind-mills, and ſluggiſh clay-coloured waters, made me recollect with painful pleaſure the pure ſtreams that poured, like melted chryſtal, from our Alpine hills; and the romantic receſſes and ſweet water-falls, where our Highland peaſants grind their ſcanty crop.—What pleaſed me moſt,

was

was the diſtinguiſhed beauty of the Lancaſhire women, not void of the more attractive charms of grace and ſoftneſs, for they have, for the moſt part, good figures, and, with them, fine dark eyes are often united with a ſoft complexion,—clear pale you know, which you muſt have obſerved do not often meet elſewhere.—I was abſolutely dazzled.—I do not know when I ſaw ſo much beauty ſet off with ſo much elegance; for every body is dreſſed, and this deſcends to the lower claſſes.—I am ſure you are very tired, and will not object to my going a-while to dream of the fair Lancaſtrians before I proceed. I never had ſo much writing leiſure ſince I was a girl, and I fly to it as a refuge from "the pains and penalties of idleneſs," and thoſe eating cares that follow where we fly, baniſh ſleep, and embitter reflection.—Good night!—

LETTER CXL.

TO MISS. D—R.

JANUARY, 21, 1803.

NOW I am come to reclaim your attention to my ſorrowful pilgrimage.—I do not much like the Engliſh towns; the ſtreets are narrow, and except thoſe of Liverpool, they have all an unſocial look that I know not how to deſcribe. Lancaſter I ſhould not include; it is more cheerful, built of ſtone, and derives an air of dignity from its caſtle, which ſomehow brings the red roſes and holy Henry, and

> " Anjou's heroine, and the paler roſe,
> " The rival of her crown, and of her woes,"

back very forcibly to my imagination.—I have not terms of art to deſcribe the caſtle; but

but it is in a ſtyle of architecture which pleaſes me very much, and I have juſt negative ſkill enough to be ſure it is neither Grecian nor Gothic.——From Liverpool I ſet out about eight in the evening, moſt reſolutely, but avoided the long coach. In the ſhort coach, however, I found one gentleman, the top being loaded with drunken ſailors.—My companion, however, was a Scot, and the ſon of a clergyman. In the morning we breakfaſted at the very pretty town of Litchfield, which appeared to me haunted by the ghoſts of Johnſon and Darwin, whom I could not get out of my head while I ſtaid there.—I ſaw a fine old cathedral, beautiful gardens, and for the firſt time clear ſtreams, which Narciſſus himſelf could not view with greater pleaſure.—Through what an enchanting ſcene did I paſs afterwards; 'twas a part of Staffordſhire, where I found preciſely the compact image of plenty, content, and ſimplicity, I wiſhed to ſee in the farm-houſes.

—Charming

—Charming varieties of riſing grounds, luxuriant vales, ſolemn ſhades, and winding ſtreams.—Then ſuch noble ſeats, ſuch rich overhanging woods, dreſt in every mellow tint, from duſky red to the paleſt yellow; ſuch a ſoothing air of tranquillity and comfort, and, above all, ſuch viſible poſſibilities of human happineſs.—I had no idea that mere landſcape could have ſuch an effect on a mind ſo worn with grief and anxiety.—But the matchleſs beauty of this landſcape was animated by cheerful-countenances of peaſants going to their early labour, and brightened by the firſt rays of a mild autumnal ſun.—O, how I enjoyed the drowſineſs of my fellow-travellers, which left me at leiſure to be delighted.——At this rate my paper will be done before I reach Briſtol; ſuffice it then that I arrived before dinner at the ſhocking, diſagreeable, town of Birmingham, where I languiſhed in reſtleſs impatience all the afternoon, and imagined I ſaw every body and thing about

me,

me, looking cold, ſelfiſh, and venal. In the morning I ſet out by three o'clock, in another long coach, in which luckily were only two ladies, mother and daughter.—During ſome converſation about our arrangements in the coach, I happened to uſe a Scottiſh phraſe (*better do*). "O how that phraſe delights me," ſaid the youngeſt; "it reminds me of dear Scotland." This was touching an accordant ſtring, and very great we grew immediately; for it appeared theſe ladies, who reſide in a village near Bath, had been on a pilgrimage of love to viſit their relations, who are ſome of the moſt reſpectable people in the weſt, and were now on their return. The old lady was a native of Scotland, and the young one fond of it to enthuſiaſm.—This day too, we paſt through a fine country, ſaw the bloody field of Boſworth, and paſt by Tewkſbury, where the uſurper's corpſe was carried.—It is a fine old town, with houſes in it the moſt curious antique fabrics imaginable.

ginable.—I dare ſay king-making Warwick and old Nevill were in ſome of them.—They were in a ſtyle of architecture different from any thing I had ever ſeen or imagined. The church is a ſtately edifice, the whole end of which is formed into a moſt noble window, which has a ſtriking effect.—We paſſed through Glouceſter, large and populous, full of antique towers and ſpires, and ſurrounded by a very rich and beautiful country.—The latter is picturesque, with frequent farm-houſes, in the true old Engliſh ſtyle, and ſhady with orchards.—There the country people were not bedizened, nor modernized, but had juſt the ruſticity that I like in their buildings and appearance.—In the evening, we reached the full majeſtic Severn, which is really a noble looking river.—Then were my eyes regaled with a diſtant view of the Welſh mountains, and my ears with the ſound of Briſtol bells; theſe latter were to me like a knell, and my terrors increaſed

every

every moment as I drew nearer.—My new friends were all kindneſs and ſympathy, and procured a chaiſe to carry me to Park Row at eleven, where I entered the door trembling, and was glad to find by the ſtir through the houſe, that there was nothing funereal about it.—I found my patient on a ſettee with her kind friends about her.—Worthy people, what do I not owe them!—There is no doing juſtice to their merit and kindneſs. In two days ſhe had an alarming relapſe, occaſioned by inflammation in the breaſt, for which the doctor ordered her to reſort to the Wells, as ſoon as ſhe could be moved with ſafety. It was a month before this was thought proper.—We are now ſettled in very pleaſant and convenient lodgings at the Hot-well-houſe, which I would deſcribe to you, if you were not already ſurfeited with deſcription. Now, thank God, I think I can, from our experience, recommend the Hot Wells to every one threatened with a ſimilar affection:

fection: and I am convinced the reaſon it is not generally effectual, is that people defer too long coming to it.—We have lived a month here in more profound retirement than ever we did in Laggan, not knowing any one in this quarter except the P.'s in their various branches, who are indeed invariably kind.—Yet, amidſt all this melancholy leiſure, my mind has been ſo engroſſed by intenſe anxiety for the abſent, and reflections on the paſt, and melancholy anticipations of the future, that, except mere bills of health and neceſſary buſineſs, I have written to no creature but yourſelf.—Now I hope you will have the grace to ſet due value on this proud pre-eminence.—One very ſtormy night lately, I could not cloſe my eyes, nor yet read; ſo I had recourſe to my pencil, for relief to my overburdened mind, and here is the reſult of this vigil of ſorrow, at leaſt as much of it as I can tranſmit in a letter.—

"Yes,

" Yes, to my ſoul, thoſe northern winds are dear,
That howling blaſt is muſic to my ear.——
Blaſts, whoſe ſwift wing has ſwept our Alpine ſnows,
The rocks of Morven, and the hill of roes,
Say, haſt thou wak'd my wild harp's mournful
ſtrings,
Bear'ſt thou the voice of ſorrow on thy wings,
Or haſt thou ruſh'd along the ſacred ſhade,
Where thoſe my heart muſt ever weep, are laid?
From my dear native land begun thy flight——
Bring tidings to my ſoul, O blaſt of night!—
When ſhall I view again my narrow vale,
And hear a voice in every whiſpering gale;
See ſpring's firſt violets deck the hallow'd ground,
And trace my children's fairy footſteps round;—
Then in a tender trance of anguiſh'd joy,
To my fond boſom ſhall I claſp my boy,
View the ſoft radiance of his full blue eyes,
Warm the freſh roſes on his cheek with ſighs,
And while his curls of waving amber flow
With varying luſtre o'er his neck of ſnow,
The dawn of manly beauty let me trace,
The ſmile benignant of his father's face;
While hope auſpicious points her wand of gold,
Where future days the latent bud unfold,
And bid hereditary virtues bloom,
To deck with kindred ſweets a father's tomb!"

Such

Such are my meditations, and ſuch my hopes. Now to tell you what I mean to do.—I cannot remove M— till the milder months arrive.—Next week I go to Briſtol to dear good Mrs. P.; the following one down to Devonſhire to take my laſt farewel of my deareſt friend Mrs. F., whom 'tis ſcarce poſſible I ſhall ever ſee again.—Perhaps this is not coldly and preciſely prudent; but I have no notion of friendſhip that merely exhales in breath, or flouriſhes on paper.—Cromwell's ſaints got at laſt above ordinances; and I have long ſince got above indulgences. Eaſe, and what the world calls pleaſure, I deſpiſe; I have no ſacrifices to make to luxury or vanity in any of its forms: but a gratification ſo dear to my heart, ſo neceſſary to my peace of mind, I cannot, will not, deny myſelf.—Yet there are thoſe that will wonder at me, to ſay no more, for this ſingle indulgence, ſelf-devoted as I have ever been to the advantage and ſatisfaction of others.—Yet

it

it were hard to grudge this cordial drop in the cup of bitterneſs appointed for me.

* * * * * * *

* * * * * * *

I heard once of you through Barr; who I hope is like a good friendly hen, ſpreading her wings over my chickens in my abſence.—Barr, by the by, has written me an excellent epiſtle—all ſound ſenſe, and uſeful information, without one vagary, or a ſingle volatile ſymptom in it.—She mends apace, and I have promiſed for her future encouragement, to have this production framed and glazed like a ſampler. —Seriouſly, I hope we have not made a ſhuttlecock of poor Barr in vain: we have driven her backwards and forwards to each other, till her excellent, though uncultured heart and underſtanding, begin to have fair play, and appear what nature meant them. I get heroic epiſtles from my young houſekeeper too, whoſe ſpirit ſeems to have riſen to the occaſion. I never feared her

doing any thing wrong; yet, when I think of her diffidence and inexperience, I am agreeably ſurpriſed to find her ſo conſtantly and decidedly right.—I ſhall incloſe a letter for Mr. M—y, becauſe my remembrance of him at this diſtance may pleaſe him, and becauſe I think he, more than any one, requires the ſolace of amuſement, and the minute attentions of friendſhip. Often have I thought of him in theſe days when ſo many objects that I beheld with pleaſure are removed from my eyes.—Often have I liſtened with ſad complacency to the cold blaſt of night, that paſſed over the hills ſo dear to me.—Pray tell Mrs. M—— ſhe has often ſhared my penſive recollections in this land of ſtrangers.—I hope by this time you are criticiſing the H—rs, the only thing in the *Book* of *Books* that is new to you.—Remember me in a manner at once affectionate and reſpectful to your mother, and tell your brother how much I was flattered by his kindneſs to O—. I am very warmly and truly yours.——

LETTER CXLI.

TO MISS D—R,

LAGGAN, APRIL 11, 1803.

MY EVER DEAR HELEN,

YOU ſurely have not received my letter from Bath, that was ſent thence by Mr. G—, and which incloſed one for our mutual friend Mr. M—ky; for if you are the ſame unaltered and unalterable Helen, you would not let me blear my dim eyes, and wear out my grey gooſe quill with pompous narration and veritable deſcription, without once ſaying, "thanks, gentle Anne."—But you never would make this acknowledgment.—I muſt, in compliance with the intreaties of your great and grateful admirer, L. O. G., thank you for favors conferred on her, which are her nightly dream, and daily converſation.—Thus far I

had written when your letter appeared, and my doubts vaniſhed. I am happy that in the irkſome gloom of my exile, I had it in my power, by a faithful though brief tranſcript of what occurred to me during my too rapid journey, to afford you any degree of amuſement.—I am now literally "weary worn with care," and a hundred objects preſs at once upon my attention; but when I can breathe at leiſure, I ſhall tell you a little more tidings. Yet how painful it is to me to retrace the ſteps of that ſad pilgrimage, where too much leiſure for my preſent ſtate of mind, made all that ever I lamented recur ſo forcibly to my ſick imagination, bereft as I was of my comforter and ſupport.—Let me quote myſelf;

"I had ſighed o'er the bud, I had wept o'er the bloſſom,
And beauty full blown I have liv'd to deplore;
But the voice that was wont to ſpeak peace to my boſom,
Shall whiſper compaſſion's ſoft language no more.

No

No more ſhall that boſom, when heaving with anguiſh,
In the kind breaſt of ſympathy ſeek for relief,
While helpleſs I wander, or hopeleſs I languiſh,
Ah! cold is the heart that would ſhare all my grief."

Except Mr. P.'s excellent family, whom I can never think of or mention without eſteem and gratitude, our correſpondence with the living inhabitants of Briſtol was very ſmall indeed: but I could give ſome tidings from the dead, among whom I ſpent much time.

" The great, the gay, the noble, and the ſage,
" And boaſtful youth, and narrative old age,"

are to be found there, from all parts of the kingdom. The moſt diſtinguiſhed people come there to die, and the whole cathedral at Briſtol, and church at Clifton, are hung with marble tablets, with ingenious and affecting inſcriptions:—two only I will particularize.—Maſon to his Maria;

Take, holy earth, all that my ſoul held dear."

The other, a large tablet of exquiſite white marble in the form of a ſhield, with baſs-relief figures, admirably deſigned and finiſhed.—Surely you have ſeen Sterne's letters to Eliza; if not, do without delay read them. It is her monument I am deſcribing. The inſcription is ſimply thus:

"Sacred to the Memory of ELIZABETH DRAPER,
Wife to GENERAL DRAPER,
Who died at Briſtol in the 28th year of her age.
She was eminent for Genius and Benevolence."

There is an urn with a drapery hanging in ſuch looſe eaſy folds over it, that you are tempted to liſt it up.—On one ſide is a female figure of matchleſs grace and elegance, "her looks commercing with the ſkies."—She leans penſively on the urn with one hand, and holds a flaming torch in the other.—This repreſents Genius.—On the other ſide is a figure of a leſs dignified, but, "ſoft, modeſt, melancholy, female fair," who ſeems to look compaſſionately into

into a neſt of young birds, which ſhe holds in one hand, and feeds with the other. This is Benevolence. Beyond theſe, on one ſide, a broken column denotes the fragility of the moſt perfect human forms, which moulder and decay like the nobleſt productions of human art and ingenuity. On the other, a palm, the emblem of immortality, appears like the undying ſpirit.—But I muſt not indulge this deſcriptive mood, to which my journey northward would give full ſcope, had I leiſure.—Yet fain would I deſcribe Devonſhire, the Engliſh Arcadia—its pure ſtreams, its paſtoral hills, its rich vales, and ſoftly genial climate.—This indeed is the region of pictureſque beauty.—There I went to meet the ſpring, for there,

"She firſt unfolds her mantle green."—

There I ſpent part of an April like March, in the enjoyment of a felicity that I did not hope to taſte during my earthly pilgrimage.

Fain would I give you a faint idea of the undiminiſhed excellence, the unwithering ſpirits, and unchilled affections of her

"Who heard with pain my parting ſighs,
And long purſued me with her eyes,"

In ſhort, of my own ſelf ſame A. O. alias Mrs. F.—But a theme that wakes all the powers of imagination and memory, and makes the heart and eyes overflow at once, deſerves, and ſhall have a letter to itſelf.—The book of books has been delayed to my great vexation; for I believe had it come in time it might have obtained ſome notice in England, where Burns's mighty overpowering genius has ſwept down the mounds of prejudice in its impetuous progreſs. Nay, it has abſolutely made way for a partiality for Scotch productions.—This merit may no doubt be divided with Campbell, who is indeed forte-piano in a very ſuperior degree.—My impreſſion, however, thanks to the active zeal of my friends, is the largeſt

ever

ever printed in Scotland; but the ſame printer has the Court of Seſſion reports (formidable rivals indeed,) to print all winter.—They were buſy with my beloved old bard when I came away, and had only the ſubſcribers names (to me, and many others, the moſt intereſting part,) to finiſh. —I know by the mental pangs I have ſuffered for ſome days paſt, that the book is born, and you may expect to hear it ſome day ſqualling at your door; but, alas! thoſe rough nurſes the critics, whoſe hands do not ſpare, nor their eyes pity!—Bitterneſs may be borne,

"But what high heart could ever yet ſuſtain,
The public blaſt of inſolence and ſcorn?"

and who believes, or cares for that want of leiſure, and numberleſs other wants which you know of, among which I wiſh, for the ſake of my repoſe, want of feeling might be included in the preſent inſtance.—The Edinburgh review is (woe is me!) a work

of ability from which there lies no appeal. Theſe young cenſors, however, ſeem to have ſtudied Shakeſpeare well, and to be emulous of the character of Ceſario, of whom Olivia ſays,

" O what a deal of ſcorn looks beautiful,
In the contempt and anger of his lip!"

They ſeem to expect the public will regard their *beautiful ſcorn* with the ſame partiality. —For my part, I am rather inclined like Orſino to dread what they may prove

" When time has ſow'd a grizzle on their caſe,"

when they are already ſo apt to be ſcornful. I met two very agreeable women at Mr. T—'s, one of whom is a ſiſter of Mr. M—y's futura. I like her much.—Of your friend's choice, I can only ſay that I heard M—y ſpeak highly of her, who knows her very well.—Shut out, as ſhe muſt be, in ſome meaſure, from the vain and buſy world, by the peculiar nature of her duties, what a delicate and ſuperior happineſs muſt be

hers;

hers; to whom is allotted the charge ſo like that of a guardian angel, to preſide, inviſible to him, over the comforts and enjoyments of one of the worthieſt and moſt amiable of mankind, ſtill more beloved, as he is more dependant.—Why have I not left room to tell you how ſweetly rural and ſequeſtered I found my dwelling at W—d, or of the tranſport that filled the dear family, both native and adopted, when I arrived?—The dear creatures are all improved. B— has done wonders, and my poor ſervants too, worthy creatures—it would be ungrateful not to record their fidelity. One misfortune I have to lament; my little boy ſpeaks nothing but Engliſh.—I am ſo provoked at his loſing the native tongue, though it appears to be the only loſs which my family ſuſtained in my abſence. I regret your collateral loſſes; yet it is ſome conſolation that your beloved ſailor will be permitted to worſhip his houſehold gods a while longer. Farewel

I have a thouſand urgent demands on my attention. Though I cannot write, reſt aſſured of the attachment of yours ever.—

LETTER CXLII.

TO MISS D—R.

MY DEAR HELEN,

VERY ſick and very buſy as I am, I am ſo charmed with your goodneſs, in being ſo mindful of me under ſuch a preſſure, that I loſe no time in thanking you, and in congratulating you on the recovery of a mother, a friend, and an exemplary model of every ſocial and domeſtic virtue.—Do me the juſtice to believe, though urgently preſt to take the meaſure you mention when I was in England, preſt for money in a land

a land of ſtrangers, I not only rejected the propoſal, but the rejection coſt me ſo little effort, that I never once thought of telling you I had refuſed it.—I ſhould conſider it as a ſtain to the memory of the moſt delicate and diſintereſted of human beings, if I, walking ſo long in the pure light of his ſpotleſs mind, ſhould be induced to do any thing that could bear the conſtruction of diſingenuity to benefit his family. By the divine bleſſing, there is little danger of their wanting what is neceſſary, and it is my duty to endeavour to limit their wiſhes within narrow bounds.—Having fully acquitted myſelf, I wiſh I could next acquit B—r; but B. is a comet, whoſe eccentricities I cannot trace, far leſs circumſcribe. —I know the truth, warmth, and innocence of her heart ſo well, that I conſider her as one to whom

"Much muſt be forgiven, becauſe ſhe loved much."

—Yet I have been puzzled and enraged for

for the time at her inconſiſtencies.—It is a hard matter to ſee one who has a good heart, a good head, and good principles, the ſport of impulſe, and ſuch ſtrange impulſes too.—Why has not B— genius? She has all the ſigns of the elect, their exaggerated virtues, and heedleſs propenſities.—I hope this will find you quite well. —I know you now perfectly, in the ſimplicity and very ſimilitude of A. O.'s deſcription. Your patience in illneſs raiſes you not a little with me.—I can't bear the tribe of croakers; they are indeed

"Like the black raven hovering o'er my peace,"

no leſs a bird of omen than of prey; for they really prey on my comfort.—I do not believe theſe *diſmalites* feel half what I do; if they did, they would be glad to ſeize a reſpite when they could.—I believe you very deſerving, yet if theſe clouds did not intervene, you would have more than your ſhare of thoſe ſhowers of manna allotted

allotted to ſupport us in our travels through the wilderneſs.—I do think you gather more than a homer, when I take brothers, and muſic, and literature, into the account. I have my ſhare too, though I am doomed to eat it like the paſchal lamb, with bitter herbs.—I hope there will be no war, and that your brother will take root and flouriſh in his native ſoil.—What a feaſt muſt rural and domeſtic life be to an uncorrupted mind, after toſſing about in a profeſſion where the mode of life is ſo unnatural.—I will give my opinion, ſuch as it will be, after a haſty peruſal of the poem you had the goodneſs to ſend me; but you in return muſt give me yours of Dr. C.'s Malachi.—I did not tell you how very ill I have been of the Cowper-mania.—I do not now mean the Doctor, but the delightful author of the Taſk.—Read his letters and his life by Hayley, as I did, and you will find them.

" Of power to take the captive ſoul,
And lap it in Elyſium."

Your

Your young couſin's poem to ſcience is a wonderful proof of premature abilities.—It ſhews genius under the direction of wiſdom, and does equal honour to his judgment and his poetical faculties.—No wonder thoſe, to whom the culture of ſo fair a flower has devolved, ſhould carefully attend to its unfolding; but if it were mine, I would not have it reared in England. Who will care for Scotland, after being bred in ſo fine a country? I would have a ſon of the muſes be a patriot and a true blue Scot.—John Bull is not ſo much alive either to the tender or ludicrous as we.—And why?—he has too much eaſe, and too many conveniencies, which he cultivates to a degree injurious to ſocial life, and ſocial love, and which will produce the ſame effect on us whenever we attain them.—It is partly to this apathy, that irreligion, the ſource ſo fruitful of every evil, is owing. We ſtruggle by the light that kindles darkneſs into day, through hunger, poverty, and hardſhip;

hardſhip; our bleſt enthuſiaſm lights up the dreareſt proſpects with rays that ſtream from heaven.—Earth-born views are ſo bounded, that the ſoul ſoon ſickens with the reiteration of unvaried comforts, and languiſhes amidſt all its enjoyments.—There are doubtleſs very many pious people in England among the more enlightened middle claſſes, but our "virtuous populace," is our peculiar and invaluable bleſſing.—I am now ſpeaking of devotion merely as an earthly comfort. Did I tell you I read Campbell's Pleaſures of Hope at the Wells, and was charmed and elevated beyond meaſure? I hope this will find B— in her penitentials at your feet.—Tell her there is a letter of mine on the way to her.—Our final day is the 11th June.—Did I tell you of the Marquis's viſit? Was it not very conſiderate and good?—Farewel. I am tired out of meaſure, and will not beſtow another word on you or him, as well as I like you both.—Good night.——

LETTER CXLIII.

TO MISS D—R.

LAGGAN, MAY 17, 1803.

MY DEAR HELEN,

YOU muſt have felt ſome of the pains and penalties of authorſhip, to have any idea of the cordial ſatisfaction I derived from reading Mrs. R—e's elegant criticiſms. —I inſiſt upon it, it betrays hardihood, inſolence, and indeed ſome hypocriſy, to affect indifference about public opinion, when one has once left the ſafe and peaceful ſhades of privacy.—Very reluctant indeed I was to plunge into that ſtream; but now that I am in, I moſt undoubtedly would wiſh to keep above water as long as poſſible, and conſider ſuch approbation as

Mrs.

Mrs. R.'s as an excellent cork jacket to affiſt my floating.—The Della Cruſcas, and many others who fed the public with gilt gingerbread, to the great delight of all maſters and miſſes who loved glitter and tinkle, took very ſuddenly with their admirers, and ſunk as ſuddenly into deſerved oblivion.—Plain common ſenſe, with few and ſimple ornaments, will only be reliſhed by the lovers of nature at its firſt appearance. But the power of thoſe judges, in ſome reſpects, reſembles that of a certain great aerial potentate—it is inviſible, indefinite, and unacknowledged; yet daily increaſes and extends over all manner of people, and tongues, and nations, and many act under its influence who imagine themſelves free agents.—I will run this diabolical parallel no further, but merely obſerve, that good ſenſe, in the long run, generally recogniſes and obeys as arbiters of taſte, thoſe beſt qualified to fix the boundaries of opinion.—Praiſe from the praiſeworthy is

of

of all gratifications the higheſt and moſt delicate; and poor authors militant, who muſt fardels bear, &c., have much need of ſome ſuch cordial.—But after all my locality, the narrow circle I walk round muſt for ever preclude me from exciting general intereſt.—By the pains you take to ſoothe my feelings with regard to the wrath of thoſe who ought to thank me for my well meant efforts, I ſhould fear I had expreſſed too ſtrongly my opinions on that ſubject; but you ought never to indulge a thought that I could be diſpleaſed at the generous concern you expreſs, leſt it ſhould be hurtful to my intereſt or reputation.—In that matter I have gone to the barrier of truth, and beyond it I will not go for mortal;—and for jeſuitical concealments, I know no art but ſilence.—If delicacy or prudence forbid being explicit on any ſubject, I can let it alone; but if I touch a ſubject from which a thouſand public diſcuſſions have long ſince drawn the veil of concealment,

I will

I will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.—I ſhould like at any rate to be tried by my peers, that is, by people who know as much about the ſubject as I do.—Far from being diſpleaſed with you, I conſider this as an additional proof of that active, zealous, and unwearied friendſhip, which does honour to your own character, as well as to me, and which I often think of with admiration equal to my gratitude.—No one has had warmer and more faithful friends, but you are the only inviſible female friend who has made diſtinguiſhed exertions on my behalf (for Miſs M. I place to Mrs. F—'s account).—I have lately made a great acquiſition in an inviſible male friend; but, alas! I can hope for little more than his parting bleſſing, for he is full of days and honor, and drawing near the verge of time, yet takes ſuch a lively intereſt, and writes ſo like a gentleman, a chriſtian, and a man of taſte and intelligence——*More I muſt not ſay,*

but

but I feel a kind of triumphant ſatisfaction, in finding that age has no power to damp thoſe virtuous feelings which ennoble our nature, when they flow from the proper ſource.—My dear worthy Mr. A—b—t (anpther inſtance of generous enthuſiaſm illuminating life to its cloſing period), is faſt decaying, and has not been out of his room for many months. The very laſt letter he wrote was to me,—and if ever I ſee you, you ſhall ſee it, and be convinced I do not overvalue the writer.—I hope you receive favorable accounts of all your brothers, particularly your beloved nautical hero, who, I imagine, has a very ample ſhare in the diviſion of affection.—He is quite in, or rather on his element now.—Pray have you ſeen Campbell's glorious effort on the Tyrtean lyre?—

> "Her march is on the mountain wave,
> Her home is on the ſea."

I wiſh you would tell me, whether you admire

admire Campbell's "words that glow, and thoughts that burn," as much as I do; and whether you are tempted to have a little Teraphim image of Cowper in your chamber for your private devotions; and whether you are very proud that so many women distinguished for elegance and intellect, as well as virtue and piety, gave up the pleasures of this vain world for a time, to extract the thorns from his heart, and pour in the wine and oil of consolation.—I am always glad when I can warrantably boast of my own sex.—We are better than men upon the whole. Indeed the few amiable men I have known had many femalities in their tastes and opinions; but then I must allow the most respectable women have some masculine traits too.—Nature does nothing wrong. It is women who affect and assume the masculine character, that are insufferable.—Tell Barr, for it will charm her, that the two most respectable women, and firmest, truest friends

friends exiſting, are about to form an union with each other, by domeſticating and living as much together as circumſtances will admit, as I ſhall hereafter explain. She will know I mean Mrs. F. and Miſs M.—Have you ſeen my rhyming deſcription of our houſe?—Perhaps I may conclude it ſome quiet, gloomy evening, with an account of the oaks of W— d, &c. —O that you came to Edinburgh!—Then would you ſurely viſit "my cabin that ſtands by the wild wood," and caſt a look of kindneſs on its inmates.—O., who now, thank God, enjoys perfect health, is always begging me to ſend her love to you.—She will never have done ſpeaking of B—th, which ſhe conſiders as the abode of taſte, elegance, and felicity.—I wrote to our friend, congratulating him with heartfelt pleaſure on his new connexion, and intreating that his beloved would *own receipt*.—But no,—ſo you ſee it is not your alone that are waſhed from recollection by the tide

of

of happineſs that has flowed in upon our correſpondent.—But fear not; we ſhall yet emerge; we are too *good* to be forgotten; and his choſen is too generous to engroſs him.—Pray write, and be ſure you tell me every thing, about every body.—I am reſolved to like all your people, becauſe you like all mine ſo well,—B— B—chr—n, for inſtance, who is elegance, vivacity, and truth perſonified.—I can no more.—Remember me to your excellent mother.—I am not more pleaſed with her regard than yours, but I am prouder of it.—Adieu, my dear Helen; write ſoon, and think kindly and often, of your affectionate friend.

LETTER CXLIV.

TO MISS J. E. AT GLASGOW.

LAGGAN, MARCH 1, 1786.

MY DEAR J.,

I HOPE this will find you ſafely returned from England, much improved by your travels, and ſo repleniſhed with candor and good-nature, that you will excuſe my ſending this by poſt; which I proteſt proceeds from no hoſtile deſign againſt your purſe, nor from any vain conceit that you will have here the value of your ſixpence, but to relieve me from a weight of perplexity and concern that I can ſupport no longer. But in caſe there ſhould have been miſtakes or miſapprehenſions, I ſhall give you a clear retroſpective view of the whole ſtate of our correſpondence ſince Mr. G. brought me your May letter. - - - - - - Now my dear

dear I think no ſcruple can remain, and I beg of you, by all that is dear and friendly, to ſend me, by the very next poſt, ſixpenny-worth of your own characteriſtic truth and intelligence. New objects, new pleaſures, and new attachments obtrude themſelves ſo frequently, from the very nature of the gay ſhifting ſcene around you, that 'tis no wonder they ſhould inſenſibly exclude the old ones, whoſe diſtance, both in regard to time and place, make them appear remote even to your imagination.—But how different is my ſituation; placed on a ſerene and diſtant eminence, whence I view the toils and pleaſures of the gay and buſy world with tranquil unconcern.—I am abſorbed in the delightful contemplation of thoſe virtues and graces, either budding into hope, or arriving at maturity, which my partial fondneſs fancies in thoſe who are united to me by thoſe tender ties which nature forms and ſentiment rivets.—Thus, free from the tyranny of caprice and cuſtom, thus diſin-

cumbered of thoſe hollow friendſhips, the offspring of intereſt or vanity, which divide the attention without ſharing the heart, I have balanced and cloſed up my books of attachment, am ſcarce ſo ſanguine as to expect I ſhall find truth and ſenſibility enough to induce me to open them for the reception of a new object, and proud and pleaſed to think I have bartered away my affections, for ſuch advantageous bargains of merit and attachment.—I have now, like an opulent trader, retired to my country houſe, placed my fortune (of friends) in the ſtocks (i. e. my heart), and it is become my great ſpeculation, like theirs, to watch the riſe and fall of the funds: and to tell you the truth, I begin to fear having fallen much below par with you. Pray allow me here, however foreign the ſubject may ſeem to you, to claim your ſympathy in the deep concern I feel for the death of my friend C. M——n. Her departure was very ſudden. She was nurſing her ſecond ſon,

was

was attacked by a kind of weed fever incident to nurſes, (though rarely fatal) and died the ſecond day.—You can't think how I was affected by her loſs, though already loſt to me in an unequal marriage.—Her ſenſe was ſtrong and maſculine; her ſentiments juſt and liberal, though neither ſoft nor poliſhed, and her affection for me—— ſuch as now wrings my heart to remember. What a deep and diſmal chaſm is left in the imagination, when the mind wanders in ſearch of what is torn for ever from its graſp, and for the open heart and melting eye of cordial friendſhip, meets only the ſolitary manſions of the dead. Now that I am in the figurative mood, you muſt indulge one more alluſion to the Sybil's books, which increaſed in value as they decreaſed in number; even thus it is with my dear remaining friends; ſo you may contemplate your own importance as a volume of increaſing value. —— —— goes on improving amazingly; ſhe has an uncom-

mon memory, lively and delicate feelings, and a ſtrong deſire to pleaſe and excel.—Her junior has much paſtoral expreſſion of countenance, which, in the Arcadian language, means gentleneſs and innocence.—She is prudent, regular and exact in all her little tranſactions.—J. L— is a great lump of generoſity and good nature, and ſhrewd withal; whoſe mind I take it will be as open as his countenance—P. has a more marked countenance than any of them, His features are regular, and, for a boy, delicate.—He has much fire and alertneſs about him. He was very healthy, and ſo quiet, that it was a pleaſure to nurſe him; which pleaſure, however, was interrupted by a very ſevere attack of the rheumatiſm.—He now walks, and ſpeaks many words.—Apologies for egotiſm between you and me are affected and unneceſſary.—Of whom, or of what can I write here ſo intereſting to you as myſelf? and the ſame holds from you to me.—Caro ſends very many, and

and very kind compliments to you all. This letter is levelled partly at you, and partly at your ſiſter.—The very idea of her neglect is wounding.—Remember me with eſteem to all your brothers, and to your mother, and let me know by next poſt whether you think it of importance that

I am yours unalterably.

LETTER CXLV.

TO MISS J. E.

LAGGAN, JULY 5, 1786.

MY DEAR J——Y,

WITH all due gratitude, I acknowledge your three letters, which, from a travell'd Lady juſt arrived from England to a ruſticated highland matron, are no ſmall marks of condeſcenſion.—But you will never aſſume a character, and have not been long

enough from home to acquire a new one. The merit of your kindneſs is augmented by conſidering what ſmall returns of entertainment you have to expect.—We here have been all in a hurry with public amuſements for this fortnight paſt.—You will be quite at a loſs to conjecture of what kind they could be.—Roups (ſales) then, are a great ſource of amuſement here, and a very expenſive one to the roup makers—At the diſſolution of any family, by the death or removal of its head, it is cuſtomary here to ſend letters of invitation to all the connexions which intermarriages have created to the defunct for a century paſt in the neighbouring counties, inviting them to countenance the ceremony by their preſence.—This invitation tacitly includes an expectation, warranted by old cuſtom, that theſe allies, as they call them, will purchaſe things rather beyond their value.—The wealth of the family conſiſting in the number of their cattle, and their pride in the

number

number of their connexions; the one come to purchaſe the other, and both are diſplayed in their full extent.—Whether it can be well afforded or not, there is always a plentiful dinner and very plentiful drink on theſe occaſions, which the friendly greetings and recollections of ſo many people bound by a common tie, frank, lively, and not deficient in that good breeding which habitual kindneſs and courteſy forms, render no unpleaſing ſcene to thoſe who ſee the concluſion of it. It is indeed a very joyous one.—Beſides the entertainment for the ſuperior claſs, there is always a plentiful diſtribution of bread and cheeſe and whiſky to the peaſantry, whoſe cheerfulneſs never exceeds the bounds of reſpect and decorum.—The general good humour diffuſed by this meeting of numbers, who know and like each other though they do not often mingle, and the emulation of good-will to the entertainers, generally raiſes things to a great price.—Though you want nothing, you

muſt appear to countenance the buſineſs. A refuſal on ſuch an occaſion would be thought as odd in the highland monde as it would be in the beau monde to refuſe an invitation to ſtand and be ſhot at. You always hear highlanders talk of countries, but did I ever tell you what our countries are? —not by any means pariſhes, counties, or any ſuch diviſions as you are uſed to:—a country here means a habitable track, divided by rocks, mountains, and narrow paſſes from the adjacent countries, and inhabited by a particular clan. Theſe, in places where only two or three miles of rocky eminence ſeparate them, differ in looks, language, and manners, more than you could imagine poſſible.—Nay, they affect to differ; for bordering clans often live in bitter and jealous rivalſhip: and though individuals love, and ſometimes marry each other, the general diſlike continues. Different clans, in their collective capacity, form ſtrict alliances with each other, and

are cordial in their attachment; but they are such as live at a distance from each other, and cannot interfere about hunting, hill-pasture, &c.—The Grants, and Macleans, for instance.—But to return to our roups.——We were not, on this occasion, presented with the usual spectacle of festivity mingling with the grief of the widow and orphans.—The first was that of a person who died childless, and, from the caprice of his nature, never could enjoy the gifts of fortune, though he was at the same time a man of such upright intentions, that we all acquiesced most patiently in his removal, hoping he would find that peace in happier regions which always eluded his grasp in this discordant world.—After picking the bones of our departed neighbour, we all set out to eat the chieftain up alive; for you must know he is a colonel of the guards, and took a fancy to live on his estate two years ago, built a new house, and brought fashionable furniture from London.

For half a year he lived hoſpitably in the *the abode of his fathers*, but wiſhing to have his domain improved and planted, and aſpiring, as every colonel does, to die a general, he has let it for ten years to a judicious and noted improver, on condition of having it reſtored, with hundreds of dikes, thouſands of drains, and ten thouſands of trees upon it.—Judge, then, how you will find the ſcenery tamed and improved when you return.—To make way for this arrangement, every article of cattle and furniture were ſold.—The *roup* laſted a week. There were ſeveral of our connexions from Strathſpey there.—We had a cold collation there every day, and as many ſtrangers every night as our own houſe would accommodate.—When all this was over, we paid a round of viſits with the G.'s before they left the diſtrict.—P—, thank God, is fairly through the ſmall-pox.—Caro goes to the Sky diſtrict to meet his brethren, and I, next day, for F— G—, where I will leave

your ſpiritual connexion to learn Engliſh and confidence, and bring home M—, who begins to look pale and poliſhed, to benefit by a little wholeſome ruſticity and goat's milk.—C— was nearly blown up in the Cæſar man of war, and is come home from that ſcene of wealth and corruption, with his mind unſpoiled and his pockets empty. I am told he is doing well enough in his original profeſſion. He will be happier, but the world will not think ſo.—My couſin, whom you have ſeen, is returned from India, perfectly qualified to talk of

"Antres vaſt, and deſarts wild;"

for he returned by land.—He paſſed through Syria, and was half a year in Cyprus, and returned by Marſeilles.—He too, has failed of enriching himſelf in the modern Ophir; but I queſtion whether he will bear the privations that obſcurity is heir to, as well as the philoſophic C—, who is too wiſe for ambition, and too calm to be diſturbed by the fervours of imagination.—Tell your ſiſter that I love her as well as

ſhe

ſhe did Adam in her ſampler, the day he was finiſhed.—I will write to all the dear ſouls from the leiſure of the ſort; and in the mean time give you joy of the concluſion of this long tireſome letter, and bid you heartily adieu!

LETTER CXLVI.

TO MRS. B—,

FORMERLY MISS J. E.

LAGGAN, OCTOBER 10, 1788.

MY DEAR MRS. B.

I WILL loſe no time in thanking you for the very friendly and intereſted part you take in all that concerns me, of which I have a recent proof in your atetntion to poor C.'s concerns. If I live till the time of her return, next year, I hope to have the pleaſure of telling you in perſon, ſome where

where or other, how affectionate a ſenſe I retain of all your kindneſs.—You ſeem ſo engroſſed with this fame *Caro* of yours, that you ſeem quite unconcerned at what p ſes round you, and never give a word of *nouvelles* to me, who languiſh in obſcurity, and moreover in total ignorance of what the Clydeſdale world is doing; which is all the world to me.—If you did but know how it renews my youth, and awakens *the light of my ſoul*, to recollect

"Thoſe happy ſcenes, beyond recovery fled."

Not that the preſent are unhappy, or at all ſo unanimated as you may imagine.—If you would tell what you are all about, I would, for inſtance, tell you how the bard of bards, who reached the mouldy harp of Oſſian from the withered oak of Selma, and awakened the ſong of other times from its forgotten ſtrings, is now moving, like a bright meteor, over his native hills; and while the muſic of departed bards awakes

the

the joy of grief, the ſpirits of departed warriors lean from their bright clouds to hear, and a thouſand lovely maids deſcend from the hills of roes, and pour forth the tears of beauty to the woes of Malvina; while the fair mourner of Sutha rejoices in the preſence of her love, to hear his fame reſound once more from Albion's cliffs to the green vales of Erin, &c. &c. &c.—This bard, as I was about to tell you, is as great a favorite of fortune as of fame, and has got more by the old harp of Oſſian, than moſt of his predeceſſors could draw out of the ſilver ſtrings of Apollo's.—He has bought three ſmall eſtates in this country within theſe two years, given a ball to the ladies, and made other exhibitions of wealth and liberality; and now keeps a hall of hoſpitality at B.—his new-purchaſed ſeat, where there are as many ſhells as were in Selma, filled, I doubt not, with much better liquors. - - - - - - I make no apology for haſte and inaccuracy.—'Tis a fine

harveſt-

harveſt-day, and I write with my ſon in my lap.—Adieu, my dear friend. Accept *our* beſt wiſhes for your choſen, and aſſure him I conſider him as a new and near connexion.—I am always yours.—

LETTER CXLVII.

LAGGAN, MARCH 9, 1789.

TO MRS. B.,

* * * * * * *
* * * * * * *
* * * * * * *

FOR, as low as you rate your critical abilities, they have altogether captivated and dazzled my good man. He deſires me to keep the letter for the girls, to moderate the poignant affliction they will feel, ſome time hence, in weeping over Werter.—He conſiders

conſiders this pathetic hero as a weak though amiable enthuſiaſt, and looks upon Charlotte as firſt couſin to a coquette.—Albert is his hero.—With him he ſympathizes, and for him he feels, more than for the friend and lover of nature and of Charlotte.—I execrate the plan, deteſt the example, reprobate the reaſoning, ſhudder at the catastrophe, and am moſt perniciouſly charmed with that vivid colouring, that fervid glow of ſentiment, that energy of thought, and that ſimple unadorned pathos, which, without a pomp of ſounds, penetrates and melts the very ſoul.—In all his afflictions I was afflicted. Yes, with all his agonizing horror, I ſaw the dreadful brink, ſaw the laſt pang of diſſolution "like a flaſh of lightning illumine the dark gulph of futurity;" but it was loſt in a moment in impenetrable obſcurity, nothing remained but the lime trees, beneath whoſe ſhade he wiſhed to reſt, and the ſilent grave where

"Pity trembles while it weeps."

Do

Do not laugh at me for catching a ſpark of Werter's enthuſiaſm amidſt ſo many cares and bairns.—Judge from thence its fatal effects on

" A heart oppreſs'd with love and grief,"

at an earlier period of life :——its deſtructive tendency in repreſenting people worthy, amiable, and enlightened, cheriſhing deſtructive errors, ſhutting their eyes to viſible conſequences, and inflicting miſery on others as well as themſelves by the indulgence of feelings, ambiguous even in their dawn, without one exertion of fortitude to conquer them, without any generous regard for the peace of others, without indeed that diſintereſted attention to the future peace of the perſon beloved, which true affection ſhould produce in a pure and elevated mind. —Theſe ſelfiſh lovers go on to the precipice of deſtruction, with the groſs and vulgar ſubterfuge, that while the perſon is inviolate, no rights are invaded.—I have

ſome

ſome compaſſion for Werter, but very little indeed for Charlotte. In all points of delicacy, a woman of a mind at once cultivated and untainted, is a natural judge.—Such a mind repels the idea of a divided affection, of giving to the fond and faithful lover, poſſeſſed of her earlieſt affections, what fond and faithful love will ſpurn at with diſdain, chill eſteem and half-hidden ſentiments.—Yet this is the perſon we are taught to admire, and to conſider as having a ſlight blemiſh loſt in a blaze of excellence, and atoned by unavailing remorſe.—Yet, after treating theſe hazardous Platonics with due ſeverity, I will tell you in a whiſper what I think the better tendencies of this novel: It depicts nature truly, very truly indeed; for when I read the ſhort letter, expreſſing his rapture at the diſcovery of his favourite fountain, where he ſays,

" Fairies and genii ſeem to hover over it," &c.

I felt

I felt my early days renewed, having on ſuch occaſions, in the morning of life, felt the very ſame ſenſations, and gone about reſtleſs with the deſire of meeting ſome one who could derive as much joy from as ſimple cauſes. I am ſure I have loved particular ſpots, as well as ſome people are capable of loving thoſe deareſt to them.—There is no wonderful adventure, no ſplendid ſcenes ſhewn to dazzle and miſlead the imagination; no ſudden acceſſion of wealth to make thoſe happy to whom Heaven has allotted happineſs, with which wealth has no connexion.—Sentiment may have ſlain its thouſands; but has not vanity ſlain its ten thouſands.—The great danger of novel reading is a reſtleſs deſire of being ſeen and admired, kindled by the ſurpriſing adventures of the heroines, the wonderful events which the admiration excited by their beauty produces, and the ſplendid deſtiny that generally awaits them.—It is this that makes young people ſo impatient

of

of peace and retirement, ſo ſick of the plain realties of common life.—In Werter there is no exaggerated deſcription, no unnatural or inflated language, no gilding or glitter. You feel always at home, and find yourſelf among ſuch people as you daily meet; and it is this truth of painting that communicates the ſtrong intereſt we feel in the perſons, while our judgment is in arms againſt their conduct.——It is the manchineel tree, whoſe apples attract us as much by their reſemblance to the fruits of the ſame form, as by their ſuperior beauty. —We go with the eaſe of familiarity to repoſe under it, though its ſhadow is danger, and its fruit deſtruction.—I have ſaid ſo much of Werter that I ſhall refer all I would ſay of myſelf to another letter.—Judge how our imaginations have been impreſſed, when I tell you Werter has enlarged the phraſeology of the Lagganites. Laſt October, Spey very often inundated the valley we inhabit; the various weather

that

that caused this overflow, occasioned many of those nights in which the moon bursts out, and vanishes by turns in total gloom. This partial light makes our mountain scenery appear very awful, and the tremulous effulgence on the wide expanse of troubled waters heightens the effect.—These we familiarly called *Werter nights*. You cannot but remember the horrors of his nocturnal rambles, while meditating the perpetration of

"A deed without a name."

Rejoice that my critical quiver is emptied, and believe me your unchanged and unchangeable friend.

LETTER CLXVIII.

TO MRS. B., GLASGOW.

LAGGAN, AUGUST 13, 1789.

MY DEAR MRS. B.,

I AM ſuch an œconomiſt of your pence, that I have deferred my ſincere and cordial congratulations all this time, in hopes of getting them ſent by one who has cheated me at laſt.—Yet this is the only teſtimony in my power to give of the unabated friendſhip I ſhall always retain for you, and this is ſimply all; for with me deſpondency and ill health have been ſo conſtantly producing and reproducing each other for ſome time paſt, that I have neither the power nor inclination to furniſh you with the leaſt degree of entertainment.—C. and I were all

laſt

laſt week on a tour of viſits on Loch Laggan ſide, where the romantic ſingularity of the place, and peculiar turn of its ſequeſtered inhabitants, might, in happier hours, have afforded a ſubject for amuſing deſcription: as it is, I can only ſay, that the rocks and woods which border this fine piece of water are equally gloomy and magnificent; while the ſpot where we ſpent moſt of our allotted days, can be equalled by few in a ſingular aſſemblage of rural beauties. The deep ſilence which ſurrounds you in a place ſecluded even from the highland world, and diſtant from every other human dwelling, affords leiſure to contemplate the placid features of the ſcene around the houſe.—This, from a ſmall eminence, ſurveys a meadowy plain bordering on the lake, in which large trees have been left here and there, producing a very fine effect to the eye.—Through this extended meadow a ſtream, delightfully pure, wanders over fine gravel, while you trace its progreſs by the copſes

of hazle and alder, vocal with the ſweeteſt ſtrains of woodland melody, and rich in all the ſmaller wild fruits that abound in this diſtrict.—In the immediate ſcene you are ſoothed with every thing that is beautiful, and in the ſurrounding ones, awed by all that is majeſtic.—The lofty Corryander, the haunt of eagles and of clouds, towers behind; before the lake ſpreads its ſtill expanſe. Oppoſite, the dark remains of the moſt ancient foreſt in Scotland borders the whole eaſt ſide of the lake; above it, riſes a mountain wooded almoſt to the top, and beyond theſe awful ſolitudes appear rocks, at whoſe barren deſolation the mind revolts. Of the inhabitants of this receſs, I can only ſay they are peaceful and induſtrious, and ſeem as mild and harmleſs as the ſheep, who are the ſole ſubjects of this realm of ſolitude.—I ſhould tell you that the lake contains two ſmall wooded iſlands, on which are ſome fragments of buildings of the moſt remote antiquity. One is called the Iſle of Kings;

Kings; the other that of Dogs. For there, it would appear, their Caledonian Majeſties, who had here a hunting ſeat, uſed to confine Bran, and Snath, and all their other followers of the chace.—It was haymaking time; we worked at our needles, or wandered, at will, all the long ſunſhine day in the haunt of roes. In the evening we had regularly a party on the water, and muſic.—You ſtart, but I am correct. When our landlord's ſons had wrought till tea-time, they came in to reſt, and whenever tea was over, they launched out their boat, which two of them rowed to the oppoſite ſide of the lake, while the third played on the violin ſome of our favourite old tunes, that brought you and your muſic full on my recollection. But we were not merely regaled with airy ſounds; the central gloom of the ancient foreſt abounds in bilberries, ſtrawberries, &c.; and having others with us to haſten the taſk of gathering, we left the youths

fiſhing, returned by twilight, and ſupped on the trout they caught, the fruit we gathered, and richer cream than ever your low-land eyes beheld.—This literally paſtoral excurſion has ſet my pen in motion beyond my own expectations; for I have ſo far loſt the knack of writing on nothing that you once aſcribed to me, that I ſeem now no longer able to write on any thing.—Were I poſſeſſed of deſcriptive talents, C.'s extravagant joy on the birth of your ſon would give full room for their diſplay.—As for me, the moral and melancholy turn which my thoughts have lately taken, leads me to aſſociate even the cradle with the grave, its ſure, however diſtant ſucceſſor.—

"Birth's feeble cry, and death's deep diſmal groan,"

are very properly connected by our favourite plaintive bard, whom by the bye I am told it is not now the faſhion to admire.——Dear J—y, continue to love me, till I learn the *laſt new faſhion of the heart*, till

till I ceaſe to have a taſte and feelings of my own, and to be in ſome meaſure guided by them.—I wonder when it will become faſhionable to regret that the graſs is not blue, or the ſkies green.——C., whoſe love of infancy is moſt inordinate, regrets that ſhe is not with you to aſſiſt in nurſing your heir.—How does Mr. B. reliſh this change of ſcene?—Whether is he moſt diſturbed by young maſter's cries, or amuſed by his ſmiles?—for I ſuppoſe he begins to relax his little muſcles by this time.—Have you yet learned to admire the beauty, and find out the expreſſion of a countenance, which to all unconcerned obſervers appears unformed and vacant?—Hard it would be indeed, to ſupport the real cares and fatigues of a mother, were not ſuch ideal pleaſures mingled with them. Pray beſtow the charity of a letter upon me very ſoon. A little time from you will now be valued like the widow's mite, becauſe you can ill ſpare it. You uſed to boaſt, long ſince,

that when you had children, they would be better bred than mine or Mrs. S—'s.—Now comes the trial and the proof.—I heartily condole with Mrs. —— on the loſs of her ſon, which will wound her pride, as well as her more tender feelings; for I ſuppoſe ſhe was vain of having him.—I too was vain once, but my vanity, I hope, is buried with the cauſe of it.——C—, I believe, has written your ſiſter.—I will when I can.—Mr. —— joins me in warm and ſincere wiſhes that your ſon may be a long continued bleſſing to you both; and in beſt reſpects to his father let me add a caution which painful experience dictates.—Love him with moderation, as we ought to do every earthly thing.—Make my beſt wiſhes acceptable to your brothers and their mates, and thank the latter for me on C—'s account. I am, my dear Mrs. B—, with much affection,

Yours truly.

LETTER CXLIX.

TO MRS. B.

LAGGAN, FEBRUARY 13, 1790.

MY DEAR MRS. B.

I HAVE deferred writing to you this long time, waiting the return of as much ſtrength and ſpirits as ſhould enable me to do it with ſome degree of fulneſs and preciſion. —Though ſomewhat better, I am far from well, and have been this week paſt crowded with people coming to take leave of the young travellers, who go to-morrow. In the firſt place, my mind is perfectly at eaſe with regard to the depoſit I am about to place in your hands;—ſo much ſo, that I ſhall never think of giving you directions about it, convinced that, at this time of

life, and in this ſtage of education, your judgment is far more to be depended on than my own.—The arduous taſk of forming her heart, and inſtilling into her mind principles of moral rectitude and devout ſubmiſſion to the ſource of all goodneſs, is, I hope, in ſome degree performed. She is docile, and willing to pleaſe, without the leaſt tincture of levity on the one hand, or ſelf-conceit and ſtubbornneſs on the other. —You will find her diſpoſed to pay you implicit obedience, on the beſt of all principles, that of an interior conviction, that you will only order what is right.—It only remains for me to hint at the defects I obſerved, yet durſt not blame, in her paſt education, in which I have had little ſhare.

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Experience has taught me the evil of this. Kept conſtantly to my needle (of which application many trophies remain), I was childiſhly

childiſhly ignorant of every thing elſe when I got the charge of a family.

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But I have employed her in this manner all winter, and find her ſo aſhamed of deficiency, and willing to pleaſe and be uſeful, that I hope ſhe will conquer all indolent habits.—While abſent from us, ſhe was ſhut up with old people, without a companion, or any relaxation but what books afforded; in theſe ſhe took refuge, and in theſe found conſolation: but they were taken without choice or ſelection. She has, from a kind of neceſſity, read more, and perhaps reflected and digeſted more, than any Miſs of her age you know. There is a certain thoughtful indolence, a degree of over-refinement, and an indifference towards ordinary characters, and common, though very uſeful things, to be feared, as the reſult of much knowledge early acquired. This is more eſpecially to be feared in a mind that unites a degree of maſculine

ſolidity and habits of reflection, with the quickneſs and ſenſibility common to the ſex; and ſuch are generally thoſe female minds that range beyond the uſual limits in ſearch of knowledge and entertainment.—However, we need not much fear; when our pupil enters her teens, and acquires the love, and dreſs, and thirſt, for amuſement natural to that period, all this may ſcatter like morning miſts.——I do not, however, wiſh her to read much at this time; and what ſhe does read, I wiſh to be of a moral and ſerious caſt.—Let her write, dance, and attend a geographical claſs, with Mr. S—'s children. Drawing and muſic are both out of the queſtion; ſhe has neither ear for the one, nor that turn of fancy which leads to excellence in the other.—Tinkling and daubing are tolerable amuſements for the ſuperabundant leiſure of the wealthy, who have the means, as far as poſſible, to make art ſupply the defects of nature; but I would not waſte time and money in ſwimming

ming againſt the ſtream, were it but to prevent the painful hypocriſy of thoſe who are forced, from mere compaſſion, to "d—n with faint praiſe" miſerable muſic, and wretched drawing. I deſpiſe the faſhionable frippery of fillagree, which neither diſplays taſte, nor forms habits of attention and diligence.—Needle-work, good old court needle-work, is the thing. —It exerciſes fancy, fixes attention, and by perſeverance and excellence in it, habituates the mind to patient application, and to thoſe peaceful and ſtill-life pleaſures, which form the chief enjoyment of every truly amiable woman.—Ton is an epidemical frenzy, that follows and overtakes us every where, though we in following it can overtake it no where.—Would you believe it is partly to ſhun this, that I was impatient to ſend your protegée from her former abode, which is become gay and faſhionable, in as great exceſs as this is retired and ruſticated.

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To remove her by ſuch a quick tranſition from abſolute retirement to the *beau monde*, would be deſtructive to all my views, whoſe object it is to bring up my children in the utmoſt frugality, ſimplicity, and induſtry, and at the ſame time give them that culture of mind, and inſpire them with that propriety and elegance of ſentiment, which will dignify a blameleſs and virtuous obſcurity, if that ſhould be their lot, and form their manners to ſuch ſoftneſs and decorum as would not diſgrace a more eaſy ſituation, if providence were pleaſed to beſtow it upon them. You aſk how people ſecluded from the world are to acquire manner.—I anſwer that where there is mind, there is always manner, and when they are accuſtomed to treat each other with gentleneſs and courteſy, they will feel that quick diſguſt at what is rude and inelegant, which contributes more than any inſtruction to the refinement

refinement of manners.—I am ſure this homily has worn out your patience. I regret exceedingly that your ſiſter is out of town, becauſe I could wiſh M— to be with her every moment ſhe ſhould be abſent from you, except a few formal viſits, which ſhe may make to ſome of my old acquaintance. Children at her age, can hardly be conſidered as making any part of the company, being rather an incumbrance. They however amuſe themſelves, and enlarge their circle of ideas by being preſent in mixed companies; but in general, I think they are more improved by being with thoſe they know beſt and can be eaſy with, becauſe they are more intereſted, and attend more to their converſation.——I am but too ſenſible of the taſk I impoſe, and the trouble I occaſion you; but you know not how deſirous I am to have her in a private family. More I will not ſay; for it avails not to teaze you with apologies - - - - -

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I am yours moſt ſincerely.

LETTER CL.

TO MRS. B.

LAGGAN, OCTOBER 2, 1792.

MY DEAR MRS. B.

I HAD the favour of your letter ſome time ago, but a misfortune that happened to me ſoon after, put every thing elſe out of my head; nay, it did more, for my heart, once ſo ſuſceptible of every impreſſion of friendſhip and gratitude, has been for ſome time dead to every ſenſation but one.—I am ſure you are ſurprized to hear me, at my time of life, and with ſo large a family, mourning thus bitterly the loſs of a child whoſe

whoſe eternal happineſs I am aſſured of; but you know not the afflicting manner in which the flower of my family, the very image of my lamented Peter, was deſtroyed by ignorance and miſmanagement.—This ſad reflection preys upon my mind, and its impreſſion will never be wholly effaced.—I certainly was too proud and too fond of her; yet how could I be otherwiſe?—The delightful creature's ſpirit, good nature, and animation, engaged every one that ſaw her.—Though a twin, ſhe was the ſtouteſt child of her age in the neighbourhood, and treated her poor weak ſiſter with ſuch careful affection.—I cannot go through the detail of her illneſs, and the manner of her death; I have written it to C—, and I can write it no more.—Though ſure of your attention, though certain of all your ſympathy, you will tell me my ſorrow is ſinful. It would be ſo, if I wiſhed to reclaim from the Almighty the precious boon he has reſumed. Could a wiſh reſtore my darling

to

to my boſom, I would not ſacrifice the ſecurity of her bliſs to indulge the fond ſad yearnings of maternal tenderneſs.—I could reſign myſelf ſtill to mourn in all the bitterneſs of a wounded ſpirit, that ſhe might ſtill rejoice in that felicity, "which eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive." God is merciful as well as juſt in all his inflictions, though his deſigns are not obvious to our dim reſtricted view.—If my heart were not by far too much fixed on worldly things, I ſhould not require ſo ſtrong a ſhock to looſen my affections from earth; and if I felt this ſtroke leſs acutely than I do, it would not ſo well fulfil that gracious purpoſe.—What you ſay of your young friend's negligence, I allow to be true, but do not allow you the merit of the diſcovery; for I not only found it out, but pointed it out to your obſervation. You muſt allow it will take ſome time to unſpoil what people have been diligently ſpoiling for years. I will

not

not parade a requeſt for your continued attention to her, which if it required ſolicitation, would not be worth ſoliciting.—I am very confident it does not.—I am interrupted, and muſt conclude abruptly.—I received your ſiſter's letter, and was ſoothed if not conſoled by her kind ſympathy.—I now write to her through you, but hope ſoon to addreſs her perſonally.——I have too long neglected poor M—, but what have I not neglected?—Tell me whether your children have had the meaſles yet.—Let me know how you have been amuſed at the Fairly, and every thing elſe that will awaken me.—I am now a proper object for your active benevolence. Mr. G. ſends his beſt regards to you and Mr. Brown, whom he always remembers.—Adieu, my dear J—y. So much for auld lang ſyne. I am indeed, yours unalterably.

LETTER CLI.

TO MRS. B.

LAGGAN, JULY 23, 1793.

MY DEAR MRS. B.

IF I had not been dying all winter, and half killed with fatigue all ſummer in conſequence, from the number of things neglected which I was unable to overtake, it would have been unpardonable in me to have been thus long ſilent to you, on whoſe friendſhip I ſet ſo great and juſt a value. Mrs. S—— ſays you had a ſick child in your arms. This, I take for granted, was William, whom I know to be as fine a child as M— deſcribed. I think if there was any danger ſhe would have mentioned it more ſeriouſly.——I am charmed to hear you are ſo well pleaſed with ——, nor do I much

I much wonder at it, conſidering that there are many *youiſms* about her, though ſhe wants that ſpirit of accuracy by which you were ſo early diſtinguiſhed.—She is active, lively, and has an ardent, generous diſpoſition. This does not evaporate in profeſſion, but labours rather to ſerve, than to pleaſe.—For all your partiality, I ſtill think ſhe has many of the awkwardneſſes which diſtinguiſh an unbred girl.—Yet I willingly allow, it is not quite a vulgar awkwardneſs; for as I formerly obſerved to you, where there is mind, there is always, to a certain degree, manner.—Miſs O. and I uſed to call that embarraſſment; which reſults from much feeling and ſpirit, joined with little uſage of the world.—I believe a certain portion of indifference muſt go towards the compoſition of perfect faſhionable eaſe.—You muſt be fully ſatisfied with yourſelf before you can be fully convinced that every one elſe is ſatisfied with you, and the contrary idea is painful and embarraſſing.

—I give

—I give you joy of the nephew or niece you are about to acquire.—Your ſiſter is aſtoniſhed at my calling this a joyful event. —No wonder, conſidering how I am worried and worn out with ſuch acquiſitions. —Yet people here, though they ſhould be at the utmoſt loſs how to ſupport their children, ſtill continue to rejoice at every addition, and conſider the loſs of offspring as the greateſt misfortune that can poſſibly befal a family.—Thoſe who live in towns and highly civilized ſocieties, where ſuch numberleſs little ſomethings become neceſſary to make up the ſum total of felicity, have no idea how ſtrong the great ſimple outlines of what conſtitutes happineſs in a ſtate of nature, are drawn on the untutored heart.—Without reaſoning or reflecting, ſuch hearts find the ſtrongeſt and moſt pleaſurable emotions excited merely by the exerciſe of tender and laudable affections. —Strangers to falſe refinement, and incapable, from want of cultivation, of that exalted

exalted enjoyment that ariſes from ſentimental attachment, grounded on intellectual excellence, the ties of nature, the "charities" of life are the great ſources of their comfort, and ſweeten all their hardſhips.——Since bad ſeaſons, and new modes of farming, have impoveriſhed the peaſantry, I do not think there is a poor tenant in this pariſh, but what is in ſome meaſure ſupported by his children.—And there is no inſtance of one failing in this tender retribution.—Brought up with generous ſentiments, but frugal and ſelf-denying habits, they are not like the children of luxury and indulgence, whoſe deſires go always beyond their acquiſitions, and leave nothing for bounty or for gratitude.—Neither are they like the groveling offſpring of callous vulgarity, who are taught to glean and hoard and think for ſelf only.——I have rambled as uſual.—But I believe I at firſt meant to remark how inſenſibly, in courſe of time, we in ſome degree adopt the

the habits and prejudices of thoſe about us, even while we pity their ignorance, and fancy ourſelves more enlightened.—For my part, I have learnt to rejoice at the birth of people's fifteenth child, and to liſten to ſtories of apparitions and predictions with as much indulgence, though with leſs credulity, than N. B. Halhed exerciſes towards Brothers. For inſtance, t'other day, my dairy-maid, who has been above ſeven years in the houſe, and is a pious maiden, and a perfect treaſury of local and traditionary anecdote, told me a ſtory, which I am going to tranſlate literally for your behoof, and which I was forced to hear with a face of belief, for fear of being thought an infidel.—I muſt premiſe that our dairy-maids always ſpeak very wiſely to the cows, though it is only in rare inſtances, like this, that the cows anſwer them.—" Yeſterday fortnight, (I am ſure it is very true, for I ſaw a man with theſe eyes that ſaw the dairy-maid), the miniſter of

M—ne in Athol, you know—well, his dairy-maid went into the byre, and put out all the cows but one, who lay down and would not move.—'Get up,' ſays the dairy-maid; 'I won't get up,' ſays the cow;—'but you ſhall,' replied the damſel a little ſtartled.—'Go to your maſter, and bid him come here,' ſays the cow.—So the girl went, and her maſter came to the byre.—'Get up,' ſaid he to the cow; 'no, I won't,' ſaid ſhe, 'I want to ſpeak to you.'—'Say on, ſaid her maſter, ſince you are permitted.'—The cow begun; 'Expect a ſummer of famine, a harveſt of blood, and a winter of tears.'—So then the cow went about her buſineſs."——Now this fine ſtory gains ample credit, and it would be thought impiety to doubt it.—Could you have thought there exiſted manners and opinions ſo primitive as thoſe which are ſtill preſerved in the pariſh of Laggan?—Will you condemn or laugh at my ſingularity, when I tell you that I am ſo wearied and diſguſted with ſeeing ignorant,

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conceited, and irreligious coxcombs, form abſurd pretenſions to reaſon and philoſophy, by affecting to deſpiſe all that Newton, Boyle, Locke, and other lights and ornaments of their ſpecies believed, and all that inſpiration and piety have taught, that I begin to think my poor Anne's credulity more tolerable than ſuch cold hearted ſcepticiſm.—I would, at any rate, ſooner liſten to the ſad predictions of either Achilles's horſe, or the miniſter of M—'s cow, than to many "dreamers of gay dreams," who imagine themſelves "wit's oracles." No doubt the true line lies between credulity and ſcepticiſm; but if I quit that, let me go where I am led by the imagination and the heart.—Did you but know how very, very buſy I have been all day, having twenty people at work, cutting our winter fuel in the moſs, and only one ſervant at home to provide food for all theſe, with little aid, you would think my writing all this ſtuff, now that every body is aſleep, as great an exertion

exertion as that of the miniſter of M—'s cow.—I bid you drowſily adieu, for the firſt lark is warning me to bed, like an owl as I am.

LETTER CLII.

LAGGAN, JUNE 11, 1798.

MY DEAR MRS. B.,

BELIEVE I ſet a due value on your kind letter, and conſider it as a mark of particular attention in you to write me ſo fully, conſidering how much you are always occupied; but the bearer, one of your warmeſt well-wiſhers, who has been on the wing of departure for ſome time paſt, has ſtill perſuaded me to defer writing, that ſhe may have the pleaſure of delivering my letter.—I am happy to find you have in ſome degree recovered your compoſure.—So many

friends to comfort and ſympathize with, ſo many duties to perform, and ſo full a ſenſe of the value and importance of theſe duties as you poſſeſs, I always flattered myſelf would exerciſe your mind, and prevent you from ſinking under a calamity, not the leſs ſevere for being a common one.—I know 'tis the faſhion to feel too delicately to bear the mention of the departed;—but I judge of your ſenſations by my own.—I ſhould not like indeed to hear ſo fine a chord touched by a harſh or heavy hand, or haſtily bruſhed over; but the ſtill ſmall voice of ſympathy, ſummoning back the image of what my ſoul loved, would add a ſoothing ſoftneſs to the remembrance of what I never could forget.—When we contemplate that awful futurity to which we are all haſtening, methinks the terrors are ſmoothed, and the obſcurity lighted up, by the hopes of meeting again what we have vainly wiſhed to catch a fleeting hold of while here.—To think that creatures formed for the glorious

purpoſe

purpoſe of endleſs felicity, have paſſed from our boſoms and from our arms, to the enjoyment of bliſs unſpeakable,——what a pleaſing reflection, what an incitement to run the race that is ſet before us, without faintneſs or wearying!—Such contemplations mount us, and ſhould

" Mount the ſoul to heaven, nor ever glance
At man unraptur'd, uninflam'd."

—I rejoice to hear how emulous your ſon is of his couſin's unrivalled ſuperiority over other children.—How happy you and your ſiſter are in your children, and in each other!—How proud ſhould I be if I had a ſon equally ſolicitous of mental improvement; but I have a great deal of comfort, and it would ill become me to repine becauſe I have not a great deal more.—I am glad to hear you had the ſociety of your admired friends the R---s of Leiceſter ſo long.—How did you get Mr. B.'s flaming loyalty balanced with their love of liberty and liberal opinions? I think you would

be put to it.—Though I know I ſhall loſe ſome of Mr. B.'s eſteem by it, I muſt confeſs I have long had a moſt diſloyal plot for cheating the revenue, by ſmuggling a little highland whiſky to him. Finding a qualm of conſcience at defrauding my dear native country in this alarming exigence, I have made but a ſmall eſſay towards roguery, with the pious intention of doing more if this ſucceeds; but if his patriotiſm ſhould prove too ſtrong, both for his love of me and of whiſky, I beg he may not throw the bottles out at the window in the firſt heat, but pour them forth as a libation to the king and conſtitution; not forgetting the brave Swiſs, for whom I am ſure he mourns as much as we do.—I will tell you nothing of myſelf, but leave all that to C——, who is a living and faithful witneſs, ready to record every important particular reſpecting me and mine.—If you knew the tenderneſs and ſtrength of the ties by which ſhe and I have been held together for ten years paſt,

you

you would pity me for relaxing them by this ſeparation: broken I hope they will never be. Your ſiſter has given you particulars, and I cannot enlarge, for my time is broken in upon every moment with people coming to take leave of her. Remember me very particularly to Mr. B— and Mr. John. I have to thank you for your attention to my ſon, with every other kindneſs. Why is not gratitude to be weighed or meaſured, that you might know the extent of mine?

Adieu moſt kindly.

LETTER CLIII.

LAGGAN, MAY. 7, 1800.

MY DEAR MRS. B.,

WHY am I ſo dead to memory?—If you and your ſiſter thought half as much of me as I do of you, you could not be ſo

 forgetful

forgetful and ſilent. Yet I will not blame you.—I hear from C—ne you are both much occupied in the hard taſk of attending your brother in an illneſs which appears dangerous.—You may believe he and his family have my ſincereſt ſympathy.—His goodneſs of heart, and conſtant kindneſs and good-will to me, made me always take a great intereſt in him. I am extremely concerned to find that the domeſtic comforts you all ſo eminently poſſeſſed have of late been, in different ways, interrupted and embittered; but this is the lot of humanity.—The cup of ſorrow is in conſtant circulation, we muſt all drink, and moſt of us drink deeply.—It is not material whether your turn or mine come firſt; the thing is to benefit by the draught; for it requires very little ſelf-examination to convince us that we are unequal to proſperity, and unable to ſuſtain it without either growing careleſs and ſelfiſh, or attaching ourſelves too ſtrongly to the things that periſh,

to

to the utter excluſion of thoſe which are ſhortly to be our all.—For my own part, the truth of the pſalmiſt's emphatic deſcription of our nature, that "Man walketh in a vain ſhow, and diſquieteth himſelf in vain," was never ſo ſtrongly impreſt on my mind as at this very time.—There is not a perſon I care for in this country that is not ſunk in grief, from the loſs of ſome near and dear connexion,—loſt, ſome of them, in the moſt aggravating manner, by dreadful accidents, duels from trifling cauſes, and the ſcourge of war, which has ſo long deſolated the nations, though we are but beginning to feel its worſt horrors.—In Holland there fell five or ſix officers whom I well knew, or was ſome way connected with.—My reflections are to the laſt degree ſolemn and gloomy, and I ſtill imagine myſelf ſurrounded by the hovering ſhades of the departed.—It is lucky for me that the taſk of nurſing, beſides unuſual exertions in domeſtic matters, which I am obliged to

make,

make, ſo far engroſs me, that I am not at full leiſure to contemplate the dark ſcenery which imagination continually preſents.—Indeed there is no room for the play of fancy; real evils ſurround me, ſickneſs, aggravated by famine, calls our attention daily, hourly, to new objects of diſtreſs. I once thought to ſnatch a fortnight to ſee my children and embrace you both.—But it will not be.—The paſtor is appointed by the duke to overlook the diſtribution of grain which he charitably allots to his tenants.—He does not, on that account, go to Edinburgh, as he once intended, and I cannot leave him.——If you ſee C. S—, tell her this letter has coſt me ſuch an effort that ſhe muſt excuſe my not writing to her.—She ſeems very ſenſible of your attention in her preſent delicate ſtate.—What indeed does ſhe not owe to you?—I conclude in great haſte; but ſhall be, while I exiſt, truly, kindly yours.

LETTER CLIV.

JANUARY 26, 1801.

MY DEAR MRS. B.,

I TOOK your laſt letter very kindly indeed, though my long delay in anſwering appears rather againſt me. This *young* family of mine, which ſeems deſtined to be ever young and ever growing, engroſſes me more than ever, as I grow more than ever indifferent about other matters of this world.—Not that I love them better than formerly, but I love other things leſs. And though I have not, as yet, made any extraordinary progreſs in that eaſy and pleaſant ſcience of ſelf-love, I ſtill love myſelf ſo well as to fly the approaches of deſpondency, whom I conſider as couſin-german to deſpair, and the beſt mere earthly refuge I know is conſtant

ſtant earneſt employment. Yet I could contrive to find time to write, if I could find ſpirits; but all the melancholy events of the laſt year, with their more melancholy conſequences, did ſo overwhelm me, when I endeavoured to write to any one whom I knew to be conſcious of my feelings, that I ſhrunk from what uſed to be my conſolation.—My heart has been ſo ſoftened, ſo melted by diſtreſs, that I feel more than ever the kindneſs of my few remaining friends.—I cling to them in idea with a ſtronger graſp.—The value you expreſs for my correſpondence, and the ſenſe you retain of our long endeared intimacy, is a cordial to my ſick heart.—I am cheared by the reflection how much Providence has ſuited the kind and degree of comfort allotted to me to my taſte and inclination,—indulging my love of freedom and tranquillity, and giving me a warm intereſt in ſo many worthy hearts, and making thoſe with which mine was moſt intimately blended, all I could wiſh.

wiſh.—Without this the world would have been a deſart to me, and all its moſt envied enjoyments ſplendid trifles.—You will rejoice to hear, after all the ſorrows and ſad privations I have ſuffered, that I have an increaſing ſtock of comfort in my children.

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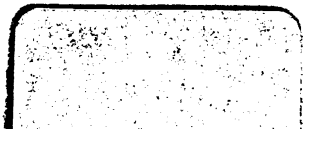
Such have been my comforts under this illneſs. How many, many languiſh in vain amidſt ſplendor and affluence for theſe high, peculiar bleſſings, that can only be given or received by minds of a certain deſcription.——How are Mr. B.'s monarchical ſpirits ſupported under the triumphs of the great conſul?—We are here all in ſackcloth and aſhes.—I did not give myſelf credit for ſo much public ſpirit as this occaſion has called forth.—My blood really chilled with horror and anguiſh. Alas, for the poor Swiſs!—I fancy the wits of all your politicians are ſharpened by hunger.—We are better off than moſt of our neighbhours.

—Our

—Our crop, I hope, will feed us till the new one comes.—I wrote your ſiſter about a commiſſion of rice for the duke's tenants, which I thought your brother might procure. We long to hear from you.—Mr. G—— joins cordially in every good wiſh to you and yours, with your affectionate friend.

THE END.

Straban and Preſton,
Printers-Street, London.

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